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Université de Montréal

Becoming and Impermanence in Nietzsche's Philosophy

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Becoming and Impermanence in Nietzsche's Philosophy

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Pentru Dana, prunela ochilor mei, imaginea sufletului meu, Costel si
Catalina, parinti dragi, si Bogdan, fratior scump.

Dem Werden den Charakter des Seins *aufzuprägen*-das ist der höchste *Wille zur Macht*. *Zweifache Fälschung*, von den Sinnen her und vom Geiste her, um eine Welt des Seienden zu erhalten, des Verharrenden, Gleichwertigen usw. *Das Alles wiederkehrt, ist die extremste Annäherung einer Welt des Werdens and die des Seins: Gipfel der Betrachtung.*

To *stamp* the character of Being onto Becoming - that is the highest *will to power*. *Two-sided falsification*, starting from the senses and [starting] from the spirit, in order to hold on to a world of beings, of persistence and equivalence and so on. *That everything recurs is the extreme approximation of a world of Becoming to that of Being: peak of the meditation.*

Nietzsche, *KSA* 12, 7 [54], *Wille zur Macht* 617, 1883-1885.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I will quote the published texts according to the following acronyms. In the published texts, the number following the acronym corresponds to the aphorism or the section in the text. Following that there is a KSA reference which indicates first the volume and then the page number. For the unpublished material, I follow the usual way of quoting by using the volume number of the KSA followed by the number of the fragment. In some rare cases I cite the volume of the KSA and the page number since some texts (as for example “*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*” or “*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*”) although not published have an essay form. For the English texts, since they are not used extensively in this dissertation I have indicated the titles in full and the translations which are used.

German Abbreviations:

KSA	Kritische Studienausgabe
GT	Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik. Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche 1872. Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik. Zweite Auflage. Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche 1874. [Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1878.] Die Geburt der Tragödie, Oder: Griechentum und Pessimismus. Neue Ausgabe mit dem Versuch einer Selbstkritik. Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche 1886.
HL	Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben. Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche 1874.
MA	Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister. Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1878.
M	Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile. Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1881.
FW	Die fröhliche Wissenschaft (“la gaya scienza”). Neue

Ausgabe mit einem Anhang: Lieder des Prinzen
Vogelfrei. Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche 1887.

- Za I Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und
Keinen. Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1883.
- Za II Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und
Keinen, 2. Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1883.
- Za III Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und
Keinen, 3. Chemnitz: E. Schmeitzner 1884.
- Za IV Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle
und Keinen, 4. Vierter und letzter Theil. Privatdruck.
Leipzig: C.G. Naumann 1885.
- JGB Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der
Zukunft Leipzig. C.G. Naumann 1886.
- GM Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift. Leipzig: C.G.
Naumann 1887.
- GD Götzen-Dämmerung, oder: Wie man mit dem Hammer
philosophirt Leipzig: C.G. Naumann 1889.
- EH Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist. Leipzig: C.G.
Naumann 1889 (2 Korrekturbogen für druckfertig erklärt
dann nicht erschienen). 1888/1889 Erstdruck hg. von Raoul
Richter. Leipzig: Insel 1908.

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INTRODUCTION

My aim in this thesis is to investigate the concept of Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy.¹ It will be argued here that Becoming is one of the most central concepts of Nietzsche's philosophy. I will assert that Nietzsche develops a metaphysics of Becoming by eliminating teleology from his account of Becoming and reality. Heidegger has claimed that will to power is a way in which Nietzsche re-thinks the concept of Becoming. According to this reading, will to power is the Being of beings, but it is also *essentia* and Becoming as opposed to Being which is associated with the eternal recurrence of the same. I grant Heidegger's thesis that will to power is a re-thinking of Becoming, but I believe that this interpretative move still leaves some questions unanswered. Some of these questions relate to the problem of permanence and impermanence in Nietzsche's account of Becoming and reality.

To situate the discussion of Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy, it should be remembered that Becoming is originally conceptualized in Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* in terms of *energeia*, *entelecheia* and *dunamis*. It might be agreed that the culmination of the thought of Becoming is reached in Nietzsche's philosophy as he expresses Becoming qua *dunamis* in terms of will to power. It will be seen that will to power is thought in terms of Becoming as *energeia* and *dunamis* although a priority should be ascribed to *dunamis* over *energeia*. It is well-known that Aristotle also thinks Becoming in terms of *en-telecheia* and *en-telos*. The relationship between Being and Becoming is difficult to discern in Nietzsche's thought but it is my belief that a doctrine

¹ Since Plato and perhaps Parmenides, the verb *estin* (to be) has taken a particular importance in Western metaphysics and logic. Consequently it has become habitual to spell the concept of "Being" with an uppercase letter. Nietzsche has sought to re-habilitate the concept of Becoming (*Werden*) in the face of Being. This is why I have chosen to spell "Becoming" with an uppercase letter.

of Becoming in general is intelligible as is proven by Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. In fact I will use Aristotle's work as a methodology and a heuristic to the concept of Becoming in order to try to shed light on Nietzsche's doctrine of Becoming. Becoming is not one of the major rubrics of Nietzsche's philosophy such as will to power, eternal recurrence, nihilism and the *Übermensch*. Yet, it is my thesis that Nietzsche's philosophy can be explained entirely in terms of this concept. This is the task that I have set for myself in the present work.

The first section is a historico-philological analysis of the occurrences of the term "Becoming" and "teleology" in Nietzsche's work as a whole. This section is much more philological and it constitutes a close reading of the Nietzschean corpus and an analysis of how the concept of Becoming is developed in that corpus.

Section two deals with the issue of Becoming in Nietzschean scholarship. The first chapter is devoted to an analysis and a critique of Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. I take Heidegger's interpretation to be fundamental for any understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy. To put it bluntly, Heidegger has changed the map in Nietzsche studies. There has been a tendency in more recent scholarship to want to go beyond this reading. I think this is perfectly legitimate as progress is always both possible and necessary. The originality of my dissertation can indeed be seen in great part in the way it challenges the Heideggerian reading. In a way, I make use of Müller-Lauter's critique of Heidegger's reading. I claim that Nietzsche at once completes *and* de-constructs metaphysics as onto-theology.

Müller-Lauter has already shown that in Nietzsche's thought metaphysics is undone from within metaphysics. This is in a way what I am claiming as well. Nietzsche is

at once *within* the onto-theological edifice and *outside* it. But my thesis is developed by looking at how Nietzsche removes teleology from within Becoming. It is only through this removal that Nietzsche de-constructs onto-theology. Nietzsche's relation to onto-theology is ambiguous not unlike his relation to atheism. My thesis is that Nietzsche is caught within onto-theology insofar as he accepts, to a certain extent, the identification of God with Being as *permanent presence* that is characteristic of Western onto-theology since Augustine. But insofar as Nietzsche describes the "death of God", he has also managed to think transcendence within immanence and to inscribe Becoming within the Being of God. In this way, Nietzsche has fluidified and made im-permanent the concept of Being and Becoming. Nietzsche believes that Being is Becoming *and* that Being is a fiction. By thinking Being (Becoming and time) in terms of its im-permanence, Nietzsche has already anticipated the thinking of Being in terms of time.

The second section of the dissertation attempts to summarize the most important post-Heideggerian (Lukács and Jaspers are also discussed and their interpretations chronologically precede Heidegger's lecture-courses on Nietzsche) contributions to Nietzschean scholarship. There are, as I see it, two main currents: the Anglo-American one (Danto, Schacht, Nehamas, Clark, Richardson, Leiter) and the Continental one (Heidegger, Jaspers, Lukács, Müller-Lauter, Habermas, Deleuze, Vattimo, Figl, Stack, Abel, Gerhardt, Salaquarda, Hofmann, Franck). I will try to do justice to both these currents as I develop my own position.

At the end of section two there is also a theoretical methodology for analyzing Nietzsche's concept of Becoming. Nietzsche's understanding of Becoming is examined

against the background of Aristotle's (Excursus 1) and Hegel's (Excursus 2) respective accounts of Becoming.

The last section of the dissertation will situate this notion of Becoming in the context of Nietzsche's thought. In section 3.1, I deal with Nietzsche's suspicion towards truth and metaphysics and his analysis of the influence of language on thought. Section 3.2 attempts to offer a general summary of the relationship of the main rubrics of Nietzsche's thought, will to power, eternal recurrence of the same, nihilism, and *Übermensch*, to the concept of Becoming. Section 3.3 deals with historicism and its influence on Nietzsche's thought: it also analyzes how history and Becoming are related in Nietzsche's thought. A comparison is done between Nietzsche's understanding of history and Hans-Georg Gadamer's conception of history and historicity. This comparison is justified by the fact that Gadamer has been one of the most acute students of historicism of the twentieth century. Finally, section 3.4 addresses with Nietzsche's epistemology. The conclusion of that section is that without being a naturalist writ large (this assertion is complicated by the fact that Nietzsche possesses a metaphysics something which does not necessarily cohere with naturalism), Nietzsche's epistemology does show signs of naturalistic and pragmatist tendencies.

1 Historico-Philological Analysis of the Concept of Becoming in the Nietzschean *Corpus*

1.1 Philological and Chronological Analysis of References to Becoming in the Writings of Nietzsche's Early Period (1872-1877)

In this section, I examine the early writings and the *Nachlass* that surrounds it. My thesis will be that the young Nietzsche is still very much influenced by Schopenhauer. Nietzsche is not worried at this point to remove teleology from within Becoming. He is still influenced by the negative *telos* that operates within Schopenhauer's philosophy and that is constituted by the increase of suffering in the totality of the world-Will (*Welt-Wille*) that is embodied in each of the actions of human subjects. It is only with the beginning of the so-called positivistic or "*Aufklärer*" phase of Nietzsche's thought which starts with the publication of *Human, All-too-Human* in 1878, that the preoccupation with a naturalistic epistemology and a critique of a metaphysical beyond starts to dawn on Nietzsche.

It will be the aim of my dissertation to investigate and research whether there is a radical change or a deep continuity in Nietzsche's concept of Becoming across the vast Nietzschean *corpus*. I can already say that I favor the continuist thesis and it will be my aim to show how Becoming plays the role of holding Nietzsche's philosophy together across the three periods that are attributed to his thought. In my opinion, this Heraclitean, anti-metaphysical aspect of Nietzsche's thought has been neglected by Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as last Western metaphysician.

In the following citation, Nietzsche does a sort of summary of the history of the concept of Becoming in Greek philosophy. This passage occurs in the context of the writings on the Pre-Socratics and shortly before the publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*:

Erste Periode. Das Werden erregt das θαυμάζειν. Ionische Philosophen. Zweite Periode. Das Problem des Werdens wird erkannt. Metaphysik. Dritte Periode. Die Teleologie, der Zweck des Werdens. Vierte Periode. Die Dialektik als das Sicherste. Ohne Erkenntnis keine Tüchtigkeit. Die Philosophie wird reformatorisch und imperativisch und aggressiv.¹

In this history the introduction of teleology within the concept of Becoming is seen as the third phase and interestingly it comes before the establishment of the dialectic as a formal tool establishing true knowledge. This might perhaps seem strange since although Plato introduces the dialectic, it is only with Aristotle that a rational teleology is introduced in the concept of Becoming.

The following passage of 1873 shows Nietzsche's early affinity with Heraclitus. Reality (*Wirklichkeit*) is a pure activity (*Wirken*) that is devoid of Being:

Wer sie vor Augen hat, muss aber auch sofort zu der Heraklitischen Konsequenz weitergehen und sagen, dass das ganze Wesen der Wirklichkeit eben nur Wirken ist und dass es für sie keine andre Art Sein gibt...²

For Nietzsche, in the early writings, Becoming is unique and eternal. Reality on the other hand, is totally inconsistent in its activity. Nietzsche writes that Becoming is associated to life but is not reducible to it. However, I would like to defend a position that does not make of Nietzsche a mere *Lebensphilosoph*.³ I believe that Nietzsche, and

¹ KSA 7, 14 [29].

² "Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen", KSA 1, 824.

³ As Bollnow, O., (*Die Lebensphilosophie*, Berlin, Springer, 1958) shows, Nietzsche is doubtless also a *Lebensphilosoph*. What I am opposed to is a reduction of Nietzsche's thought to *Lebensphilosophie*. I believe Nietzsche's philosophy to be so rich that more can be made out of it. But this has already been shown by Heidegger's remarkable interpretation of Nietzsche. Some later scholars (Deleuze, Müller-Lauter) have decided to focus on the bodily and vitalistic aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy in order to gain some distance from the strong Heideggerian reading.

this accords with his own self-interpretation, is as rigorous a thinker as Aristotle.⁴ For these reasons, I believe that it would be perhaps more fruitful to explore how will to power radicalizes the concept of *Werden* (*gignesthai*) rather than claiming that will to power and life are purely co-extensive.

The sentence quoted above with respect to the fact that the essence of reality is wholly activity is problematic. One must differentiate carefully between actuality, activity and permanence. At this point, I will discuss the problem of the relationship between quality and quantity. This relationship is essential to an understanding of how Nietzsche sees Becoming and how he develops what I call a metaphysics of Becoming. This is the case because it seems that for Nietzsche the explanation of the relationship between quality and quantity must be clarified if we are to get at his understanding of Becoming. In his discussion of Becoming in *Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*, Nietzsche goes on to assert the following:

Dies erreichte Heraklit durch eine Beobachtung über den eigentlichen Hergang jedes Werdens und Vergehens, welchen er unter der Form der Polarität begriff, als das Auseinandertreten einer Kraft in zwei qualitativ verschiedene, entgegengesetzte und zur Wiedervereinigung strebende Thätigkeiten. Fortwährend entzweit sich eine Qualität mit sich selbst und scheidet sich in ihre Gegensätze wieder zu einander hin.⁵

Further, concerning the problem of qualities, Nietzsche writes:

Die entsetzliche Consequenz des Darwinismus, den ich übrigens für wahr halte. Alle unsre Verehrung bezieht sich auf Qualitäten, die wir für ewig halten: moralisch, künstlerisch, religiös, usw. Mit den Instinkten kommt man keinen Schritt weiter, um die

⁴ It is true that Heidegger is the first that has attempted to claim that Nietzsche should be taken as seriously as Aristotle, but Nietzsche had already anticipated this comparison as we can see from the unpublished *KSA* 9, 15 [40]: “Meine Gedanken betreffen zu hohe und ferne Dinge, sie könnten nur wirken, wenn der stärkste persönliche Druck hinzukäme. Vielleicht wird der Glaube an meine Autorität erst durch Jahrhunderte so stark, um die Menschen zu vermögen, ohne Beschämung, das Buch dieser Autorität so streng und Ernst zu interpretieren, wie einen alten Classiker (z.B. Aristoteles).-“.

⁵ “*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*”, *KSA* I, 824.

Zweckmässigkeit zu erklären. Denn eben diese Instinkte sind bereits das Erzeugniss endlos lang fortgesetzter Prozesse.⁶

Nietzsche thus understands Becoming in this early text, in terms of the differentiation of qualitative aspects of force (*Kraft*). This characterization will fade as such in the later unpublished fragments in which Nietzsche treats of Becoming extensively.⁷

Nietzsche goes on to claim that Anaximander took refuge from un-determined qualities in the lap of his concept of *apeiron* (*apeiron* is also translated as in-determinate or un-determinate). Nietzsche mentions that Becoming could be seen as the struggle of eternal qualities: “sollte es jetzt aber nicht scheinen, als ob das Werden nur das Sichtbarwerden eines Kampfes ewiger Qualitäten ist ?”⁸ Nietzsche refuses the dialectical aspect of the relationship between quality and quantity, but the question then becomes how does Nietzsche view the relationship between quality and quantity ?

These questions of the relationship between quality and quantity bring us to the concept of movement. This is the case because, as Aristotle has classically claimed, there is only motion with respect to quality, quantity and place. For the early “Heraclitean” Nietzsche movement and change are the ultimate fact that can be reached. There is never stability and permanence, we live in world of perpetual change and movement. The question is how can movement and permanence (or rest) co-exist ? Do they not contradict themselves ? And what contradicts itself, is it movement or permanence (or rest) or the relationship between them ? Once it has been granted that there is a contradiction between movement and rest, how can we progress beyond this contradiction?

⁶ KSA 7, 19 [132].

⁷ KSA 11, 38 [12], KSA 12, 2 [91], 2 [110], 2 [151], 2 [165], 6 [11], 7 [54], 9 [62], 9 [63], 9 [89], 10 [57], KSA 13, 11 [73], 11 [74], 11 [82], 14 [18], 14 [31], 14 [122], 15 [53].

Nietzsche appeals to intuition and he is persistently opposed to any conceptual and rational understanding of Becoming. This is problematic as has correctly been pointed out by Gyorgy Lukács in his *Zerstörung der Vernunft* (*The Destruction of Reason*). Lukács writes:

Das Sein, soweit sein Begriff nur die leisesten Spuren einer Beziehung zu der von unserem Bewusstsein unabhängigen Wirklichkeit in sich enthält, muss durch das Werden (gleich Vorstellung) verdrängt werden. Das Sein jedoch, von diesen Schlacken befreit, rein als Fiktion, rein als Produkt des Willens zur Macht aufgefasst, kann für Nietzsche nunmehr zugleich auch eine noch höhere Kategorie als das Werden sein: Ausdruck der intuitiven Pseudoobjektivität des Mythos.⁹

A question that needs to be clarified is whether Lukács is right to claim that in Nietzsche's philosophy the relationship between Being and Becoming is only expressed as an insoluble antagonism and an eclectic amalgam. Even without subscribing to Lukács' economical and historical determinism that posits the impossibility of a relationship other than a dialectical one between Being and Becoming, it does seem that Lukács makes an important point when he claims that the relationship between Being and Becoming in Nietzsche, (and this claim holds for the totality of Nietzsche's philosophy, not just his early phase), is ultimately unclear and perhaps a bit confused.¹⁰

Something that has to be explained in the analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy is the following. If Becoming, like space and time is related only to intuition (this is the case because in his early philosophy, Nietzsche links Becoming, space and time, following Schopenhauer, to *intuitive representations*) is it not the case that the concept of Becoming lacks determination in Nietzsche's thought? If it is the case, as Hegel claims

⁸ "Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen", KSA I, 827.

⁹ Lukács, G., *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, p.344, Neuwied, Berlin, Luchterhand, 1962-1986.

¹⁰ Lukács is not the only one to think that there is a confusion in Nietzsche's usage of the categories of Being and Becoming. In *Nietzsches Totalismus* (De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1983, p.255), Walter Gebhard writes the following: "Die Selbstauflösung der inconsistent gebrauchten Begriffe 'Sein' und 'Werden' ist vielfach in Nietzsches Notizen, Aphorismen und Systemwürfen nachzuweisen."

that “there is nothing in the sky and on the earth that is not at once mediated and immediate”¹¹ is Nietzsche’s discussion of Becoming only in terms of immediate intuition justified? Here we must differentiate: it might be the case that Nietzsche’s concept of Becoming is purely intuitive and linked to Schopenhauerian will and representation in the early phase of Nietzsche’s philosophy but this linkage to Schopenhauer is definitely jettisoned in the later philosophy.

The lack of determination in Nietzsche’s early understanding of Becoming must be understood in relation to the concept of contradiction. Contradiction is the reality of the real that gives itself over to a finite understanding. Becoming is both ironic and tragic: it is shot through with contradiction. Nietzsche cannot posit Becoming as a new ideal, as a new absolute point of view from which he would articulate the truth. Becoming is only a perspective among many. Nietzsche is well aware of this and he claims that Becoming and knowledge exclude each other.¹² Knowledge is always knowledge of Being.

Becoming is not taken to possess qualitative determination by Nietzsche in the early writings most notably in “*Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*”. It can play the role of not being determined in terms of its ability to express the true and the good. The true and the good necessitate a stability and a permanence that is afforded by the concept of Being. Trueness and goodness would not be possible without the ability to predicate that is given by the third person singular of the verb to be. S “is” P forms a determination P of S (it is the basis of the first logic developed in Western civilization:

¹¹ “Hier mag daraus nur dies angeführt werden, dass es Nichts gibt, nichts im Himmel oder in der Natur oder im Geiste oder wo es sei, was nicht ebenso die Unmittelbarkeit enthält als die Vermittlung, so dass sich diese beiden Bestimmungen als ungetrennt und untrennbar und jener Gegensatz sich als ein Nichtiges zeigt.” Hegel, G.-W.-F., *Wissenschaft der Logik I, Werke 5*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, Frankfurt Am Main, 1969, p.66, from now on this book will be referred to as *Logik*.

¹² *KSA 12*, 9 [89].

Aristotle's syllogistical theory of logic) that is not possible when expressed as S becomes P.¹³

Nietzsche claims in "*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*", that Aristotle indicts Heraclitus in front of the tribunal of reason for having sinned against the principle of contradiction. Nietzsche believes Heraclitus' thought of Becoming can be understood in terms of intuition. Nietzsche's reading of Heraclitus is in itself interesting since it seems to go against and contradict the picture of Heraclitus that Hegel possessed. It is worthwhile to remember that Hegel had claimed that there was not one sentence of Heraclitus that he had not taken up in his *Wissenschaft der Logik (Science of Logic)* which is factually false. The struggle to clarify the modern concept of Becoming then might hinge upon who, of Nietzsche or Hegel, has better understood Heraclitus. This question might ultimately be undecidable.

But let us return to the analysis of Becoming as it is given by Nietzsche in "*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*". Nietzsche refers to Heraclitus' claim that "Alles hat jederzeit das Entgegengesetzte an sich."¹⁴ But strangely enough when it comes to explaining the concept of intuition, Nietzsche refers to Kant's notion of the *a priori*. Nietzsche discusses time and space and calls them pure *in themselves (an sich)* and means by this the fact that they can be apprehended immediately. The fact that this immediate apprehension of time and space is not purely Kantian, but is mediated by Schopenhauer becomes apparent when it is made clear that time and space are understood not as sensible intuitions but as *intuitive representations*. In Nietzsche's early works, the philosopher has not yet found his own language when it comes to discussing the problem

¹³ In the statement S "becomes" P, the substrate S transforms itself into the entity P. All qualities and quantities of S are changed. In the statement S "is" P, P can express a quantity and a quality that is predicated of S but the essential substrate S does not change.

¹⁴ "*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*", KSA I, p.823.

of Becoming. Rather, Nietzsche still falls back upon the Schopenhauerian conceptuality of will and representation to describe Becoming as the following show: “Im Werden zeigt sich die Vorstellungsnatur der Dinge: es giebt nichts, es ist nichts, alles wird, das heisst ist Vorstellung”¹⁵ For, Nietzsche, who follows Schopenhauer’s lead here, Becoming is likened to representation. By starting from representation, Schopenhauer assumes that this basic, representation, is more fundamental than both the components it includes of subject and object. Representation is closer to Becoming and to the phenomena than the subject and the object are. It is true that will and representation are opposed in Schopenhauer, but it is precisely this dualism which Nietzsche is beginning already to question here in his early unpublished fragments. Becoming will be the key concept that will help Nietzsche overcome Schopenhauer’s dualism of will and representation.

Nietzsche continues to use the language of Schopenhauer insofar as he connects Becoming to *Wille*: “Wir, die wir genöthigt sind, alles unter der Form des Werdens, das heisst als Willen zu verstehen, verfolgen jetzt die Geburt der drei verschiedensartigen Genien in der uns allein bekannten Erscheinungswelt...”¹⁶ By joining Becoming to both *Wille* and *Vorstellung*, Nietzsche’s already trying to bring together the two fundamental concepts that Schopenhauer wants to keep apart into the more basic concept of Becoming.

In Nietzsche’s early *Nachlass*, he identifies a *telos* but this *telos* is a political one: the state should have as its aim and purpose to breed the genius: “seinem letzten Zweck nach, eine Schutz und Pflgeanstalt für *Einzelne*, für den Genius zu sein scheint, so wenig auch der grausame Ursprung und das barbarische Gebahren desselben auf Ziele

¹⁵ KSA 7, 7 [203].

¹⁶ KSA 7, 10 [1].

hindeutet.”¹⁷ This idea of breeding reappears in the later works and *Nachlass* when Nietzsche writes of the possibility of breeding the *Übermensch*. In the early works however, Nietzsche was still influenced by this idea of the genius that had been popularized by Kant’s third *Critique* and that was re-activated by Schopenhauer.

In the following passage Nietzsche alludes to the distinction that he has made famous in the *Birth of Tragedy* between the Apollonian and the Dionysian:

Während aber der apollinische Einzelne vor nichts so sehr gehütet wird als vor der entsetzlichen Erkenntnis, dass jenes Wirrsal von leidenden und sich zerfleischenden Wesen in ihm sein Ziel und seinen Zweck habe, benutzt der dionysische Wille gerade diese Erkenntnis, um seine Einzelnen zu einer noch höheren Stufe und sich in ihnen zu verherrlichen.¹⁸

The Apollonian protects itself from the “horrifying knowledge” (*entsetzlichen Erkenntnis*) of the suffering and self-dismembering being (*sich zerfleischenden Wesen*) whereas the Dionysian will (here again the influence of Schopenhauer is unmistakable but the transformation of *Wille* into *dionysischer Wille* is already an original insight of the young Nietzsche) uses the knowledge of suffering and self-dismemberment to individuate itself and transfigure itself into a higher level of actuality. In reference to this duality between Apollonian and Dionysian, Nietzsche writes further: “Das gemeinsame Geheimniss ist nämlich, wie aus zwei einander feindlichen Principien etwas neues entstehen könne, in dem jene zwiespaltigen Triebe als Einheit erscheinen...”¹⁹

He asks himself how from the two antagonistic principles (of the Apollonian and the Dionysian) something new can arise and be created in which the two antagonistic drives appear as a unity. From this unity will arise the tragic spirit of the Greeks. Here Nietzsche is still caught in a dialectical way of looking at Greek civilization (and by

¹⁷ KSA 7, 7 [121].

¹⁸ KSA 7, 7 [122].

¹⁹ KSA 7, 7 [123].

extension at German culture which he understands as modeled or as if it should model itself on Greek civilization especially what Nietzsche characterizes as the Tragic Epoch of Greek thought). He himself was aware of the problematic nature of his endeavor and in the later corpus he gives up the notion of the Apollonian to deepen his original insight of the Dionysian.

In the following citation, Nietzsche writes that the intellect is an organ of the will. This reminds one of Nietzsche's later expressions in which he claims that the intellect is an organ of knowledge and that our organs of knowledge radically determine the kind of knowledge that we can possess.

Wir haben uns hier zu erinnern, dass der Intellekt nur ein Organ des Willens ist und somit in allem seinen Wirken auf das Dasein, mit nothwendiger Gier, hindrängt und dass es sich bei seinem Ziele nur um verschiedene Formen des Daseins, nie aber um die Frage nach Sein oder Nichtsein handeln kann. Für den Intellekt giebt es kein Nichts als Ziel somit auch keine absolute Erkenntnis, weil diese dem Sein gegenüber ein Nichtsein wäre.²⁰

For the intellect there is not nothingness as goal and that absolute knowledge does not exist because it would be a non-being in opposition to Being.

Nietzsche brings into his discussion the concept of the *Ur-Einen* that is inherited from Schopenhauer. According to Nietzsche the totality of the empirical world has to be understood as a reflexion of the *Ur-Einen* and as a Dionysian work of art. Here, in this early work, Nietzsche points out that world-history is not a unitary process and that its purpose is reached perpetually or in every moment.²¹ This distinguishes Nietzsche's vision radically from that of a Hegel for whom world-history is conceived as a process that continually or perpetually actualizes within itself the idea of freedom and rationality.

²⁰ *KSA* 7, 7 [125].

²¹ "Die Weltgeschichte ist kein einheitlicher Prozess. Das Ziel derselben ist fortwährend erreicht", *KSA* 7, 7 [145].

Nietzsche evokes the fact that the will is something metaphysical and he relates this fact to what he calls *Urvisionen* (originary visions). This position of Nietzsche's is transcended in the later philosophy where, as mentioned previously, Nietzsche will go as far as claiming that there is no such thing as the will. Nietzsche relates again the concept of *Ureinen* to the concept of Becoming. The essence of the *Ureinen* is contradiction, semblance (*Schein*), Becoming and pleasure. "Wenn das Ureine den Schein braucht, so ist sein Wesen der Widerspruch. Der Schein, das Werden, die Lust."²² This concept of the *Ureinen* is ultimately mysterious. Nietzsche inherited it from Schopenhauer but the role it plays in his early philosophy (*The Birth of Tragedy*) and the *Nachlass* surrounding it is not clear. It seems to be a metaphysical concept, but this metaphysics is not a rational metaphysics like that of Hegel but a Romantic metaphysics influenced by Schopenhauer.

In Nietzsche's early works the concepts of Being and Becoming are constantly referred to the Schopenhauerian concept of the *Ureinen*:

Die Visionen des Ureinen können ja nur adäquate Spiegelungen des Seins sein. Insofern der Widerspruch das Wesen des Ureinen ist... Die Erscheinung als werdende. Das Ureine schaut den Genius an, der die Erscheinung rein als Erscheinung sieht: dies ist die Verzückungsspitze der Welt... Also ist auch das Schaffen des Genius Vorstellung. Diese Spiegelungen im Genius sind Spiegelungen der Erscheinung nicht mehr des Ureinen: als Abbilder des Abbildes sind es die reinsten Ruhemomente des Seins... Das Sein befriedigt sich im vollkommen Schein.²³

The concept of the *Ureinen* is related to the concept of the genius that is very important for Schopenhauer and the early Nietzsche. Being is always associated to semblance (*Schein*) in the early works. Here Nietzsche claims that Being finds its satisfaction in perfect semblance.

²² KSA 7, 7 [152].

²³ KSA 7, 7 [157].

The *Ureinen* seems to be an originary metaphysical principle from which all reality and all semblance is derived. It is not, of course the rational *hen* of the neo-platonists but a Romantic concept. The *Ureinen* seems to secrete representations, semblances and ultimately reality itself. Reality and semblance are derived from the *Ureinen* through the principle of individuation and this is another sign of Schopenhauer's deep influence on the young Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's early *Nachlass* continues to show signs of a romanticism with which he will take his distances in the second phase of his thinking (the so-called positivist or "Aufklärer" phase) and to which he does not return even in the last phase of his thought. Characteristic of this romanticism is the claim that all Being is suffering and that the true nature of life is suffering. This can be seen in the following quote: "Im Werden muss auch das Geheimniss des Schmerzes ruhen... Der Schmerz, der Widerspruch ist das wahrhafte Sein. Die Lust, die Harmonie ist der Schein."²⁴ Suffering and contradiction are true Being according to the previous quote. Pleasure and harmony are only a semblance.

Nietzsche points to the fact that the will not only suffers but that it bears semblance in every minute moment.

das Fühlen ist nicht ohne Objekt möglich, das Objekt-Sein ist Anschauung-Sein... Voll als Erscheinung wahrnehmbar ist die Welt nur für der einen Willen. *Er ist also nicht nur leidend, sondern gebärend: er gebiert den Schein in jedem kleinsten Moment: der als das Nichtreale auch der Nichteine, der Nichtseiende, sondern Werdende ist.*²⁵

Here, Nietzsche's terminology gets a bit confusing. It seemed at first that he wanted to associate Being with semblance and Becoming with reality. But it turns out that Becoming is also associated with semblance. In the philosophy of German Idealism,

²⁴ KSA 7, 7 [165].

Being is dialectically related to semblance. In Hegel's *Greater Logic*, in the book of *Wesen* there are two sub-sections that deal directly with *Schein*. But semblance or *Schein* is always dialectical and related to the determinability of Being in the *Logic*. For Nietzsche, *Schein* is related to Being and to Becoming but *Schein* and Becoming are not dialectically over-determined and subverted in order to facilitate Being's determination of itself.

Nietzsche's attempt to think through the relationship between Being, Becoming, contradiction and semblance is important for the investigations conducted in this thesis. Contradiction and semblance seem to be the root of all Being as for the German Romantics who have influenced Nietzsche's conceptions:

Wenn der Widerspruch das wahrhafte Sein, die Lust der Schein ist, wenn das Werden zum Schein gehört - so heisst die Welt in ihrer Tiefe verstehen den Widerspruch verstehen. Dann sind wir das Sein - und müssen aus uns das Schein erzeugen...Der Schein als Vater des empirischen Seins: das also nicht das wahre Sein ist.²⁶

This is the case because in this quote Nietzsche claims that semblance is the father of empirical Being and that this empirical Being is not true Being. We see that at this early stage in his development, Nietzsche has not worked out his critique of the dichotomy between the true world and the apparent world. He still believes that there is a world of Being other than the empirical world.

I repeat that it is not clear what semblance is for Nietzsche, Being or Becoming. Perhaps both are semblance and that is the way in which Nietzsche manages to think their unity at this early stage of his philosophy. On this reading both Being and Becoming would be individuated or secreted from the *Ureinen* and transformed into semblance

²⁵ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 7, 7 [168].

²⁶ *KSA* 7, 7 [169].

through the *principium individuationis*. There would be a *telos* to reality but this would be to individuate Being and Becoming into semblance.

According to this early Romantic formulation of Nietzsche's there would be no truth or reason or harmony, but only semblance and semblance of semblance (*Schein des Scheins*). This idea of a *telos* of the will which is articulated in its representations (the expression of representations being the ultimate aim of the will) is intrinsically Schopenhauerian and Nietzsche has not abandoned this way of writing and thinking at the early stage of his development. Schopenhauer, it is true, does not have a strong concept of the *telos* and this is due to his reaction to Hegel's optimistic teleology. However, the will does express a negative *telos* in Schopenhauer. The will is never the will of agents, the will of actors, but it is the expression of a primordial will that acts through the agents and actors by generating the intellect of the actors. The expressions and representations of this will are filled with suffering and each time the will acts, blindly, through the intermediary of the human intellect it only increases suffering. This increase of suffering is thus a negative *telos* of the will. It is the aim (the *telos*) of art to console humans from the horrible and tragic aspects of art. According to Schopenhauer, we can calm suffering in ourselves through the contemplation of art and by acting morally. This consoling power of art still influences the young Nietzsche especially when he claims that art is the great consoling power of life or that existence is justified only aesthetically.

The next citation is important because it throws light on the relation between the concepts of semblance and Becoming:

In dieser Welt des Nicht-Seienden, des Scheines muss alles werden: und so wird auch der Genius, indem in einem Menschenscomplexe, in einem grösseren Individuum jene dämmernde Lustempfindung des Traumes sich immer mehr steigert, bis zu jenem dem Genius eigenthümlichen Genusse [...]²⁷

²⁷ KSA 7, 10 [1].

Thus we can see that at this early stage in his philosophy, Nietzsche's concept of Becoming is associated to the concept of *Schein* that he inherits from Schopenhauer. In Nietzsche's early writings, the concept of Becoming is articulated in terms of the key concepts of Schopenhauer and the pre-Socratics. The most frequent occurrence of the concept of Becoming in Nietzsche's early works is in the text on "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks".

In the following, Nietzsche talks about the question of who is the first Western philosopher and the relation between this question and the problem of Becoming:

Immer willkürlich zu sagen, der und der ist der erste Philosoph. Thales ist genommen, weil er ein Princip aufstellt. Das ist aber ein viel späterer Standpunkt, erst den Systematiker gelten zu lassen (Bestimmung der platonisch-aristotelischen Sphäre). Voraus geht eine Menge einzelner Weltblicke: das Problem des Werdens hat schon eine lange Geschichte unter mythischen Hüllen ausgedrückt, auch die Kraft des Systematisirens ist schon da.²⁸

Nietzsche attracts the attention to the fact that the concept of Becoming has a long history that precedes both Thales and the conceptualizations of Plato and Aristotle. This long history is expressed through myths. Nietzsche is perhaps thinking here of the story of Saturn (time) who devours his children. Of course, Becoming and time cannot be identified, but an idea of coming-to-be and passing-away was already present in the Greek myths of Hesiod and Homer and it was only rationalized by Thales and Anaximander.

Nietzsche points out that Becoming consists in the inherent negativity of Being. Things are, but they come out of non-Being and they eventually return to this non-Being: "Es muss durchaus zu zeigen sein, das alles Vorhandene und Seiende irgendwann nicht

²⁸ KSA 7, 14 [27].

war und deshalb auch irgendwann nicht sein wird. Das Werden Heraclits.”²⁹ Of course, to explain the problem of Becoming it is necessary to explain the identity that is present within difference: particular things come-into-being and pass-away but the totality against which these movements and changes are perceived and contrasted subsists and makes possible the awareness of change in the first place.

In “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks”, Nietzsche analyzes how Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaxagoras struggle with the concept of Becoming. But Nietzsche has not yet achieved a clear position on Becoming. He does seem to show a preference for Heraclitus’ philosophy over that of Parmenides but his position is nuanced. In the later *Nachlass* of around 1885-87, Nietzsche arrives at a more original understanding of Becoming. Becoming is understood in constant opposition to Being in these later writings. The concept that is opposed to Being is not Non-Being as has traditionally been asserted (even in Hegel’s *Logic* since pure Being immediately moves into determinate Being and then into pure and determinate non-Being) but Becoming. The early writings on the pre-Socratics are helpful here to make sense of the later writings. In the part that deals with Parmenides, Nietzsche asserts that Parmenides observes that there are opposite qualities in nature and that one of the qualities is derived from the other through a *negation*. In the later writings, Nietzsche claims that Being is derived from Non-Being through a negation. Thus, Nietzsche denies the positivity of Being in his later works in favor of the natural and innocent flow of Becoming.

Here, Nietzsche mentions the concept of purpose (*Staatszweck*):

Deshalb ist es geradezu unvermeidlich, dass solche Menschen einen grossen Einfluss auf den Staat gewinnen, weil sie ihn als Mittel betrachten dürfen, während alle Anderen unter der Macht

²⁹ KSA 7, 19 [119].

jener unbewussten Absichten des Staates selbst nur Mittel des Staatszwecks sind.³⁰

Nietzsche distinguishes in his early writings and *Nachlass* between a political purposefulness and a metaphysical one. Men are educated with a purpose by the State. This purpose is to serve the State and its institutions. But for Nietzsche the true purpose of education is to breed the *genius* and to make possible the coming of another *Genialen-Republik* as the one that he takes to have existed from Thales to Socrates (through Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Democritus, ...).

The political and metaphysical purpose seem to coincide again as the goal is to breed the genius that can then educate the masses:

jeder Mensch, mit seiner gesamten Thätigkeit, hat nur so viel würde als er, bewusst oder unbewusstes Werkzeug des Genius ist; woraus sofort die ethische Consequenz zu erschliessen ist, dass der "Mensch an sich", der absolute Mensch, weder Würde, noch Rechte, noch Pflichten besitzt; nur als völlig determinirtes, unbewussten Zwecken dienendes Wesen kann der Mensch seine Existenz entschuldigen.³¹

This aspect of the education of the masses by the genius is tied in the previous quote with Nietzsche's contempt for liberalism and the philosophy of equal rights. Men are determined by unconscious purposes and they do not possess an intrinsic worth or rights or duties.

Nietzsche's *Nachlass* shows strong traces of individualism. However, this individualism is not the same as the one prevalent in the modern liberal democratic State. For Nietzsche the *Einzelnen* is a creator of great art and great culture not so much someone who can rationally exercise his judgment to vote and to follow his private interests: "in den grossen "Einzelnen", den Heiligen und den Künstlern liegt das Ziel, also weder vor noch hinter uns, sondern ausserhalb der Zeit. Dieses Ziel aber weist durchaus

³⁰ KSA 7, 10 [1].

über die Menschheit hinaus”.³² Nietzsche deduces from this : “Aus alledem wird klar, dass der Genius nicht der Menschheit wegen da ist: während er allerdings derselben Spitze und letztes Ziel ist”³³ These passages are reminiscent of the *Second Untimely Meditation* where Nietzsche identified the saint, the artist and the philosopher as the three types that could be *Überhistorisch*. Thus in this phase of his thought Nietzsche has perhaps not given up the belief in a metaphysical beyond and this belief is mediated by Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will as noumenon and placed outside of time and space.

According to political theory, Nietzsche is a realist: he rejects the idealism and the liberalism of most modern Western societies. This is in tune with the Romantic protest already begun by Schopenhauer: the way to escape the mediocrity of modern political life is through an escape into the realm of art, music and philosophy at least for the young Nietzsche. Education has an inherently political purpose (and probably much more, but this is open to debate) and its purpose is to breed the *metaphysical* genius. Nietzsche’s politics is located, in the corpus, in his early and middle writings. The writings on the Greek State, on tragedy, on Homer and on “The Future of our Educational Institutions” are strongly political and they show the musings of a conservative authoritarian. But these writings are paired with metaphysical and aesthetical musings and they stand in opposition to them.

Becoming is metaphysical because it is the counter-concept (this is one of Nietzsche’s great originalities) to Being. The Western metaphysical tradition had always considered that non-Being was the opposite of Becoming, but Nietzsche shows that Being

³¹ KSA 7, 10 [1].

³² KSA 7, 11 [1].

³³ KSA 7, 11 [1].

is obtained from a generalization of non-Becoming.³⁴ Thus Becoming is always related to the concept of Being and is a highly metaphysical concept.

Nietzsche mentions a possible teleology of humanity:

Von einem unbewußten Ziele der Menschheit zu reden
halte ich für falsch. Sie ist kein Ganzes wie ein Ameisenhaufen.
Vielleicht kann man von dem unbewußten Ziele einer Stadt, eines
Volkes reden: aber was heißt es, von dem unbewußten Ziele aller
Ameisenhaufen der Erde zu reden!³⁵

As I have ascertained, Becoming mediates in modern thought between history and nature. Thus I will also be interested in this section in examining those passages of Nietzsche's *Nachlass* which refer to a historical goal or purpose for humanity. As some of the passages below will show, Nietzsche conceives his critique in contrast to Hegel himself or to neo-Hegelians such as Eduard von Hartmann and Eugen Dühring. In the previous passage, Nietzsche thus asserts that humanity as a whole cannot possess a goal. This is the case according to him because of the complexity of humanity that is composed of different nations and states (we can give this loose interpretation to what Nietzsche calls the ant nests (*Ameisenhaufen*)).

Nietzsche attempts to understand Parmenides' doctrine of Being:

Dreierlei nicht mit Parm[enides] Seinslehre zu verwechseln: 1) die Frage: können wir einen Inhalt im Denken finden, der im Sein ist? [...] Wenn er die Sinne für ungültig erklärt, dann kann er das Sein nicht aus Lust- und Unlustempfindungen beweisen: diese sind dann auch Schein. Denken und Sein muß dasselbe sein: denn sonst würde es das Sein nicht erkennen. Im Denken giebt es also keine Bewegung: eine starre Seinsanschauung. Soweit das Denken sich bewegt und von anderen Dingen erfüllt ist, ist es schon nicht mehr Sein, sondern Schein.—Aber die Dialektik des Denkens? ist doch Bewegung?³⁶

³⁴ See *KSA* 12, 9 [63].

³⁵ *KSA* 7, 19 [160].

³⁶ *KSA* 7, 23 [12].

Here, Nietzsche struggles with Parmenides' doctrine of Being. Nietzsche acknowledges that Parmenides rejects the testimony of the senses and that he cannot derive Being from pleasure and pain sensations (*Lust- und Unlustempfindungen*). But this has as a consequence that there would be, according to Parmenides, no movement in thought but only Being-intuition (*Seinsanschauung*). Nietzsche contrasts Being to semblance (*Schein*). But Nietzsche claims (in the form of a question) that the dialectic of thought introduces movement into thought. This is a curious passage since in his published writings, Nietzsche, has a very negative evaluation of the dialectic and its inventor which he claims to be Socrates. However in another passage from the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche claims that his unique adversary and the one against which he is constantly struggling is Socrates. The next quote is also important because it treats of Nietzsche's understanding of Being. For Nietzsche, as I have argued elsewhere, the logical opposite of Being is not non-Being but Becoming.³⁷

Nietzsche identifies Being with breathing and life: “‘Sein’ ist die Übertragung des Athems und Lebens auf alle Dinge: Beilegung des menschlichen Lebensgefühls.”³⁸ The previous quote is important because it shows Nietzsche's identification of Being with breathing (*Athem*) and life. Nietzsche continues here his claim that we believe in Being and substance because we believe in ourselves and in our consciousness. Nietzsche claims that the stability of substance and Being is obtained through a psychological projection from the (alleged or experienced) stability of our consciousness and self-consciousness.

Nietzsche gives the following characterization of the difference between pre- and post-Socratic philosophy:

³⁷ See *KSA* 12, 9 [63].

³⁸ *KSA* 7, 21 [13].

*Schluß: das Denken der Griechen im tragischen Zeitalter ist pessimistisch oder künstlerisch optimistisch. Ihr Urtheil über das Leben besagt mehr, Das Eine, Flucht vor dem Werden. Aut Einheit aut künstlerisches Spiel. [...] Mit Sokrates beginnt der Optimismus, der nicht mehr künstlerische, mit Teleologie und dem Glauben an den guten Gott; der Glaube an den wissenden guten Menschen.*³⁹

This passage is also important because it establishes the *cesura* that Nietzsche sees in Greek thought between the pre-Socratics and Socrates. In the early philological writings, Nietzsche identifies with the pre-Socratics (all of them but with Heraclitus in particular) and sees in their philosophies a pessimistic or an aesthetical optimistic aspect that he identifies with his own views. With Socrates and the moral revolution in philosophy, Nietzsche sees the first symptoms of decadence and optimism that will come to characterize Western civilization as a whole. This optimistic view is inherently connected to the belief in progress or the existence of a historical teleology that guides humanity as a whole. This teleology is introduced, according to Nietzsche, at the same time as the dialectic by Socrates.

Nietzsche believes that science is oriented towards Becoming. This comes in conflict with a passage from the later *Nachlass* in which Nietzsche opposes Becoming and knowledge: “Alle eudämonistischen Triebe erwecken Glauben an die Wahrheit der Dinge, der Welt – so die ganze Wissenschaft – auf das Werden gerichtet, nicht auf das Sein.”⁴⁰ It seems that later in his philosophical career, Nietzsche will change his mind and claims that knowledge and Becoming mutually exclude each other (“Erkennen und Werden schliessen sich aus...”⁴¹ and that knowledge is only possible of Being.

³⁹ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 7, 23 [35].

⁴⁰ *KSA* 7, 29 [18].

⁴¹ *KSA* 12, 9 [89].

The early Nietzsche expresses his position with respect to Hegel's and Hartmann's conceptions of history and development:

[...] In anderer Art bändigte und streckte Hegel die Geschichte, er, der recht eigentlich der deutsche „Genius der Historie“ zu nennen ist; denn er fühlte sich auf der Höhe und am Ende der Entwicklung und damit auch im Besitz aller ehemaligen Zeiten, als deren ordnender *nous*. *Jeder Versuch, das Gegenwärtige als das Höchste zu begreifen, ruinirt die Gegenwart, weil er die vorbildliche Bedeutung des Geschichtlichen leugnet.* [My emphasis, P.C.] Die schrecklichste Formel ist die Hartmannsche „sich dem *Weltprozess* hinzugeben“. Wohin es führt, die Geschichte als einen Prozess anzusehen, zeigt E. von Hartmann [...] Die historische Ansicht verbrüdet sich hier mit dem Pessimismus: nun sehe man die Consequenzen!⁴²

The allusions to Hegel and Eduard von Hartmann are important. Hartmann attempted to do a synthesis between Hegel's logical optimism and Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism in his 1869-published *Philosophy of the Unconscious*.

Nietzsche thought Hartmann to be an important contemporary writer and even recommended the reading of *Philosophy of the Unconscious* to his friends, but Nietzsche could not stand the mixture of pessimism and optimism that was present in Hartmann's philosophy. Especially, Nietzsche did not believe that the individual had to be sacrificed to the world-process (*sich dem Weltprozess hinzugeben*) which would ultimately be embodied in the history of states or in the will of a social collectivity. As Nietzsche asserts in *KSA* 7, 29 [51], every attempt to view the present as the highest, ruins the present because it avoids the exemplary aspects of the past. This is an illustration of Nietzsche's classicism.

Even though Nietzsche rejected the possibility of establishing history as a firm and rigorous science comparable to mathematics, he still believed that Antiquity (and specifically the Greece of the pre-Socratics and of the tragic poets Aeschylus and

Sophocles that precedes Attical Enlightenment or classicism) could be and should be taken as a model. Nietzsche never relinquished the belief that the Greeks were the unique *Genialenvolk* of history. But he opposes the idea of an old age of history and humanity (*Greisenalter*) in which we would be wiser than in our infancy. This old age could be full of illusion and not an age of wisdom as Nietzsche takes Hartmann's position to be:

Hartmann ist wichtig, weil er den Gedanken eines Weltprozesses todtmacht, dadurch dass er consequent ist. Um ihn zu ertragen, legt er als telos zu Grunde die bewusste Erlösung und Freiheit von Illusionen und das Wählen des Unterganges. Aber das Ende der Menschheit kann jeden Augenblick durch eine geologische Umwälzung da sein: und jene Illusionslosigkeit setzte eine höhere Entwicklung der moralischen und intellectuellen Kräfte voraus: was ganz unwahrscheinlich ist: vielmehr dürften, wenn diese alt würden, die Illusionen nur immer mächtiger werden und das Greisenalter mit einem *Kindischwerden* schliessen. Tröstlich ist somit das letzte Resultat keinesfalls und könnte gewiss nicht als telos bezeichnet werden.⁴³

I take *Weltprozess* and Becoming to be almost interchangeable in the previous quote. The fact that the *Weltprozess* does not possess a telos is alluded to in this previous citation. The argument that Nietzsche invokes comes in part from natural science: a geological catastrophe could put an end to humanity at any world-historical moment and this would not entail that this state when the world ended would be the highest one attained by humanity. On the other hand, Nietzsche considers psychological and historical arguments for the claim that there is no telos to the human and physical world-process. The fact that a higher state of moral and intellectual powers is not necessarily attained through the world-process is claimed by Nietzsche in virtue of the fact as the world-process progresses, more illusions could be accumulated by humanity as a whole and a regression or *Kindischwerden* could be the end-result of the Becoming of the world-process.

⁴² KSA 7, 29 [51].

⁴³ KSA 7, 29 [52].

Despite the strong reservations towards Hartmann, Nietzsche is influenced by him even in the later years (at least Nietzsche argues in a way that, *prima facie*, seems similar to the way Hartmann and perhaps, even Dühring, argue⁴⁴) when he invokes arguments for the state of equilibrium of forces and the initial state and final state of Becoming in order to prove the eternal recurrence of the same. The following passage proves this:

Hartmann sagt p. 637: „So wenig es sich mit dem Begriff der Entwicklung vertragen würde, dem Weltprozess eine unendliche Dauer in der *Vergangenheit* zuzuschreiben, weil dann jede irgend denkbare Entwicklung bereits durchlaufen sein müsste, was *doch nicht der Fall ist (!!!)*, ebensowenig können wir dem Prozess eine unendliche Dauer für die Zukunft zugestehn; beides höbe den Begriff der *Entwicklung zu einem Ziele* auf und stellte den Weltprozess dem Wassers schöpfen der Danaiden gleich. Der vollendete Sieg des Logischen über das Unlogische muss also mit dem *zeitlichen Ende des Weltprozesses, dem jüngsten Tage zusammenfallen(!)*“.⁴⁵

Hartmann does not believe in an infinite duration in the past and this duration is in fact rejected by Nietzsche explicitly in a later passage of the *Nachlass*⁴⁶ but there Nietzsche takes Dühring to be the representative of that view. At the same time that Nietzsche rejects the impossibility of an infinite duration in the past, he accepts Hartmann's alleged impossibility of an infinite duration in the future as an absurd *progressus in infinitum*.

As Müller-Lauter points out in his *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, there is a problem in this argument from the state of equilibrium which appears in the early Nietzsche but will re-appear in the late phase of Nietzsche's thought, that relates to the infinity of time and to the problems of a *regressus in infinitum* and a *progressus in infinitum*. Eternal recurrence as a scientific and

⁴⁴ Hartmann's influence is obvious when one considers the stages of illusion regarding the state of happiness which are described in the *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. These stages influenced Nietzsche directly when he described the stages of the history of European nihilism. As for Dühring's influence it is even more pervasive. The fact that Dühring used revenge to ground his legal theory certainly influenced Nietzsche in the theory of resentment that he developed in the *Genealogy of Morals*. Finally the concept of definite number (*bestimmte Zahl*) influenced Nietzsche in his cosmological proofs of eternal recurrence.

⁴⁵ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], KSA 7, 29 [52].

cosmological theory rests on the pre-supposition of the possibility of a *regressus in infinitum*. Nietzsche pre-supposes that a regression into infinity is possible and that through this regression no first-state would be attained because all is in movement and no end-state is attainable starting backwards *ex nunc*

For Nietzsche, history has to be understood, at this stage in his philosophy, in terms of the great individual and not the development of the consciousness or unconscious, *pace* Hartmann, of the masses. This eliminates according to Nietzsche the processual aspect of history and in so doing it creates an “eternal” dialogue between the great historical individuals who are, so to speak, immediately contemporaneous (“*sie leben gemeinsam und gleichzeitig*”) with each other:

Wir wollen uns ja aller Constructionen der *Menschheitsgeschichte* enthalten und überhaupt nicht die Massen betrachten, sondern die überall hin zerstreuten Einzelnen: diese bilden eine Brücke über den wüsten Strom. Diese setzen nicht etwa einen Prozess fort; sondern sie leben gemeinsam und gleichzeitig, Dank der Geschichte, die ein solches Zusammenwirken zulässt. Es ist die „Genialen-Republik“. Die Aufgabe der Geschichte ist, zwischen ihnen zu vermitteln und so immer wieder zur Erzeugung des Grossen und Schönen Anlass zu geben und Kraft zu verleihen. Das Ziel der Menschheit kann nicht am Ende liegen, sondern in den höchsten Exemplaren, die, zerstreut durch Jahrtausende, zusammen alle höchsten Kräfte, die in der Menschheit verborgen sind, repräsentiren. Überdies: *Weltprozess*!! Es handelt sich doch nur um die Lumperei der menschlichen Erdflöhe!⁴⁷

This view of Nietzsche’s seems to still be conditioned by one possible form of historicism which claims that we can replace ourselves in the *Zeitgeist* of an author in order to understand him perfectly from his perspective.

Nietzsche criticizes the Hegelian world-process and contrasts it with his understanding of historical Becoming:

⁴⁶ KSA 13, 14 [188].

⁴⁷ KSA 7, 29 [52].

Der *Hegelsche* „Weltprozess“ verlief sich in einen fetten preussischen Staat mit guter Polizei. Das ist alles verkappte Theologie, auch bei Hartmann noch. Wir vermögen aber Anfang und Ende nicht zu denken: so lassen wir doch diese „Entwicklung“ auf sich beruhen! Es ist sofort lächerlich! Der Mensch und der „Weltprozess“! Der Erdfloh und der Weltgeist!⁴⁸

Here, Nietzsche understands Hegel's philosophy of history through the prism of Hartmann's interpretation. It must be said that the idea that the world-development and world-process ended with the coming-to-be of the Prussian state is a highly caricatural and reductive understanding of Hegelian philosophy. It is similar to the ironic critiques that have been attempted of Hegel's philosophy of absolute knowledge by Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx. The fixation and rest of theory in absolute knowledge has been criticized by some as an inadequacy of Hegelian thought to a reality that keeps evolving and changing. But some more sympathetic interpreters of Hegel's philosophy have attempted to claim that absolute knowledge could be removed as a pure end-point or finality while preserving the ability of Hegelian thought to describe reality.

Nietzsche polemicalizes with Hegel's view of history. Nietzsche claims that the stories of a world-process are swindles (*Schwindel*):

...wir fordern Erzählungen nur mit Zwecken: aber wir fordern gar keine Erzählungen vom Weltprozess, weil wir es für Schwindel halten, davon zu reden. Dass mein Leben keinen Zweck hat, ist schon aus der Zufälligkeit seines Entstehens klar; dass ich einen Zweck mir setzen kann, ist etwas anderes. Aber ein Staat hat keinen Zweck: sondern nur wir geben ihm diesen oder jenen.“⁴⁹

Nietzsche polemicalizes with Hegel on the fact that there is a necessary goal for history. Hegel, more than Hartmann, believed that absolute Spirit incarnated itself in the will of a nation-state. The world-historical individuals also play an important role in Hegel's philosophy, but ultimately their personalities are destroyed in the world-historical

⁴⁸ KSA 7, 29 [53].

⁴⁹ KSA 7, 29 [72].

actualization of reason and freedom in the State. For Nietzsche, the State is something contingent, to be used by the great individual to manipulate the masses: it cannot be a goal of history but only a means for the great individual. For Nietzsche contingency is transformed into necessity through the affirmation of the *fatum* and through the affirmation of the thought of eternal recurrence.

This idea that the State is only a means for the genius and that one cannot speak of the goal of the State or of the history of States is often repeated by Nietzsche. Nietzsche claims that the history of States is the history of the egoism of the masses. He polemicizes persistently with Hegel's view of history and the goal of history as related to the actualization of freedom in the State or of the goal of the nation-States to affirm the march of freedom in history. It is important to note however, that Nietzsche is *not a political anarchist* as his virulent polemics with the Hegelian concept of the State might prove. Nietzsche does believe in a State that could actualize will to power instead of freedom. He is a gradualist insofar as he believes that social change should be achieved through reforms of institutions and not through the over-throwing of the state through civil disobedience or violent political revolution.

Nietzsche repeats the assertion that the historical sense is a theology in disguise (*verkappte Theologie*). This is a direct attack on Hegel's interpretation of historicity and the rational nature of historicity: "Der historische Sinn ist nur eine verkappte Theologie „wir sollen es noch einmal herrlich weit bringen!“⁵⁰ In the following passage, Nietzsche again takes position against Hegel's understanding of history and rational historicism:

Alle Geschichte ist bis jetzt vom Standpunkte des Erfolges und zwar mit der Annahme einer Vernunft im Erfolge geschrieben. Auch die griechische Geschichte: wir besitzen noch keine. [...] Deutschland ist die Brutstätte für den historischen Optimismus geworden: daran mag Hegel mit Schuld sein. Aber durch nichts

⁵⁰ KSA 7, 29 [89].

hat die deutsche Cultur verhängnissvoller gewirkt. Alles durch den Erfolg Unterdrückte bäumt sich allmählich auf; die Geschichte als der Hohn der Sieger; servile Gesinnung und Devotion vor dem Faktum „Sinn für den Staat“ nennt man's jetzt: als ob der noch hätte gepflanzt werden müssen! Wer nicht begreift, wie brutal und sinnlos die Geschichte ist, der wird auch den Antrieb gar nicht verstehn die Geschichte sinnvoll zu machen. [...] ⁵¹

This passage shows Nietzsche to be in a certain sense a precursor of Benjamin and his *Theses on History*. History for Nietzsche could be conceived as something other than the *Hohn der Sieger* or as the rationality of success and those who have succeeded. As Nietzsche notes everything that is repressed by history eventually rebels (*aufbäumen*). This seems paradoxical given Nietzsche's favour of the master morality over and above the slave morality, but it shows even at this early stage in Nietzsche's philosophical career that he was concerned with alternate views of history, with understanding history as a series of partial, mutually exclusive and even contradictory histories. This understanding was in great part developed against Hegel's understanding of history as a grand narrative that completes itself in absolute knowledge and that can be explained as a series of successive overcomings and embodiments of a rational Spirit.

⁵¹ KSA 8, 5 [58].

Conclusion

At the early stage of his philosophy, up to and before *Dawn* especially in the *Birth of Tragedy*, *Schopenhauer as Educator* and in the *Nachlass* of that period, Nietzsche has not broken from the Schopenhaurian mould. There is an ambiguity with respect to how Nietzsche treats the concepts of Becoming and teleology in this early stage of his philosophy. On the one hand and from a metaphysical point of view, we can say that the telos of Becoming is maintained. Nietzsche preserves the Schopenhauerian teleology of the will, which is to increase suffering in the world totality. Art is conceived as having a metaphysical aim or *telos*, which consists in consoling humans from the tragic and horrible aspects of existence. On the other hand, from a political and cultural point of view, the telos is removed from Becoming. This is the case because the State has no purpose, no aim but it can freely be manipulated by the genius. There is a polemic here with both Hartmann and Hegel who see the *Weltprozess* as aiming at something, as fulfilling the past in the present. Nietzsche is thoroughly opposed to such a conception. With the reflections of the so-called “positivist” period, which is the next period of Nietzsche’s thought that I will deal with, Nietzsche begins to find the language of the will and of a silencing of suffering through the contemplation of morality problematic (Schopenhauer still functions with an altruistic, un-egoistic concept of morality that will be very much contested by Nietzsche).

1.2 Philological and Chronological Analysis of References to Becoming in the Writings of Nietzsche's Middle Period (1878-1882)

The concept of Becoming almost entirely vanishes from Nietzsche's middle writings. There are however some references to it in this period. An important question for Nietzsche scholarship is why the concept of Becoming vanishes from the writings of the middle period. Another important question is one that I have already alluded to and is the following: does Nietzsche's concept of Becoming change across what have come to be acknowledged (at least from a heuristic point of view) as the various periods of his thought? More concretely, I will be interested in ascertaining in this section whether Nietzsche undertakes his criticism of the concept of Becoming and whether he claims that teleology (*entelecheia*) must be removed from Becoming.

Nietzsche writes:

Wie hoch die Menschheit sich entwickelt haben möge und vielleicht wird sie am Ende gar tiefer, als am Anfang stehen! es giebt für sie keinen Übergang in eine höhere Ordnung, so wenig die Ameise und der Ohrwurm am Ende ihrer „Erdenbahn“ zur Gottverwandtschaft und Ewigkeit emporsteigen. Das Werden schleppt das Gewesensein hinter sich her: warum sollte es von diesem ewigen Schauspiele eine Ausnahme für irgend ein Sternchen und wiederum für ein Gattungehen auf ihm geben! Fort mit solchen Sentimentalitäten!⁵²

Nietzsche alludes to something that I will comment on more extensively in section 2.3: the fact that the development of humanity is not teleological. This is the case because “das Werden schleppt das Gewesensein hinter sich her [...]”. From the teleological aspect of Becoming, i.e. from the fact that it ultimately fixes itself into a stable end-state or end-point (Aristotle's *energeia*, actuality), Nietzsche claims that the

⁵² M, 49 (KSA 3, 54).

metaphysical tradition has derived a transcendent and stable beyond. This beyond constitutes the true world of Being and is constantly contrasted by the tradition to the world of appearances and of Becoming. Nietzsche's understanding of teleology and his criticism of it is related to his reception of the neo-Hegelians Dühring and Hartmann (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*).

The following passage is important since it claims that the fact that something remains stable (*Bleibendes*) in Becoming is a kind of illusion caused by our consciousness:

Unser Bewußtsein hinkt nach und beobachtet wenig auf einmal und während dem pausiert es für Anderes. Diese Unvollkommenheit ist wohl die Quelle, daß wir Dinge glauben und im Werden etwas Bleibendes annehmen: ebenso daß wir an ein Ich glauben. Liefе das Wissen so schnell wie die Entwicklung und so stätig, so würde an kein „Ich“ gedacht.⁵³

This association of consciousness with the concept of Becoming, is characteristic for Nietzsche since we believe in Being and a *Bleibendes* according to him. This is the case because we believe in consciousness. We project, according to Nietzsche, the concept of subject onto the outside and create the concepts of substance and Being. But this creation of stability and Being in turn then allows us to believe in a stable principle from which we can observe these concepts and this is the “I”.

Wolfgang Müller-Lauter has noticed that there could be some problems with Nietzsche's affirmation of a philosophy of pure Becoming. He writes the following:

Den ungeheuren Schwierigkeiten der Aufgabe, die Nietzsche in seiner Philosophie des Werdens auf sich nimmt, steht vielerlei entgegen. So wehrt sich das *Selbstbewusstsein* des Menschen trotz der am Anfang dieses Abschnitts genannten Unmöglichkeit einer fest-stellenden Selbstbeobachtung gegen die Radikalität einer Auflösung allen Seins in das Werden. Im Selbstbewusstsein liegt immer auch, dass es Beharrendes ‘gibt’, das viel Gleichheit und

⁵³ KSA 9, 6 [340].

Ähnlichkeit 'da ist'. Ohne solches 'Gegebensein' wären nicht einmal Unterscheidungen möglich.⁵⁴

This may well be. But the Nietzsche of the "positivist period" in fact criticizes the point of view of self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*) in order to achieve the more fundamental point of view of will to power. Will to power and its constructs of domination (*Herrschaftsgebilde*) precede the epiphenomenal point of view of self-consciousness. There are differentiations that can be made (*Unterscheidungen*) and a sense of the given (*Gegebensein*) can be achieved but this cannot be done by regressing behind the point of view of will to power. Will to power, however, is essentially connected to the concept of Becoming. The formations of power that are achieved and stabilized are only temporary configurations of Becoming. Thus it seems Müller-Lauter's argument against a Nietzschean philosophy of pure Becoming does not take enough into account the connection between will to power and Becoming.

Nietzsche mentions an image of Becoming (*Bild des Werdens*):

Wir haben da ein vielfaches Nacheinander aufgedeckt, wo der naive Mensch und Forscher älterer Culturen nur Zweierlei sah, „Ursache“ und „Wirkung“, wie die Rede lautete; wir haben das Bild des Werdens vervollkommnet, aber sind über das Bild, hinter das Bild nicht hinaus gekommen. Die Reihe der „Ursachen“ steht viel vollständiger in jedem Falle vor uns, wir schliessen: diess und das muss erst vorangehen, damit jenes folge, aber *begriffen* haben wir damit Nichts.⁵⁵

The fact that ideas are associated to the truth and Being and that Becoming is associated with opinion and image goes back to Plato's *Timaeus* and *Republic*. However for Nietzsche what we moderns have achieved is just this perfection (*vervollkommnet*) of the image of Becoming but we are still caught in an image and have not managed to go

⁵⁴ Müller-Lauter, W., *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1999, p.198, from now on this book will be referred to as *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*.

⁵⁵ *FW*, 112 (*KSA* 3, 472).

beyond the image. Thus it seems here, at least, that Nietzsche maintains that in order to go beyond the “mere” image of Becoming we would have to be able to understand it conceptually. Nietzsche writes:

[...] Emancipiren wir uns von der Moral der Gattungs-Zweckmäßigkeit! —Offenbar ist das Ziel, den Menschen ebenso gleichmäßig und fest zu machen, wie es schon in Betreff der *meisten Thiergattungen* geschehen ist: sie sind den Verhältnissen der Erde usw. *angepaßt* und verändern sich nicht wesentlich. Der Mensch verändert sich noch ist im Werden .⁵⁶

Nietzsche criticizes the notion of a natural purpose of the species (*Gattungs-Zweckmäßigkeit*). For him the only aim of this type of theory is to stabilize man (*fest zu machen*), man, who Nietzsche considers to be the “noch nicht festgestellte Tier”, the unfinished animal. For Nietzsche the fact that man becomes excludes any type of stability within his essence. Thus we see that Nietzsche opposes a natural purpose of Becoming even in his middle phase. We have mentioned that Becoming is often reduced to evolution by some translators of Nietzsche such as Hollingdale.

Nietzsche attracts attention to the relationship between Becoming, life and death:

Wir können uns das Werden nicht anders denken als den Übergang aus einem beharrenden „todten“ Zustand in einen anderen beharrenden „todten“ Zustand. Ach, wir nennen das „Tode“ das Bewegungslose! Als ob es etwas Bewegungsloses gäbe! Das Lebende ist kein Gegensatz des Todten, sondern in Spezialfall.⁵⁷

This passage is interesting because it characterizes Becoming as a transition from a dead state to another dead state. The idea that Becoming can only be understood as a transition (*Übergang*) from an enduring “dead” state (*beharrenden “todten” Zustand*) to another enduring dead state is developed here. This idea is important since in the later period of Nietzsche’s thought, Becoming will be instrumentalized to prove that there is no end or final-state and that eternal recurrence follows necessarily from this. This end or final-state

⁵⁶ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *KSÄ* 9, 11 [44].

could be thought of as a “calorific” death of the the universe and there is evidence as Müller-Lauter shows that Nietzsche was familiar with thermodynamic principles and that he was thinking of the problem of the final-state of Becoming in this way.

Nietzsche connects the concept of Becoming to the concept of *Kreislauf*. In this citation, Nietzsche emphasizes that the *Kreislauf* does not have an aim (*Ziel*) and also that it is nothing that has become (*nichts Gewordenes*). The idea that all Becoming operates within the *Kreislauf* is crucial:

Hüten wir uns, diesem Kreisläufe irgend ein Streben, ein Ziel beizulegen: oder es nach unseren Bedürfnissen abzuschätzen als langweilig, dumm usw... Hüten wir uns, das Gesetz dieses Kreises als geworden zu denken, nach der falschen Analogie der Kreisbewegung innerhalb des Ringes... Der Kreislauf ist nichts Gewordenes, er ist das Urgesetz, so wie die Kraftmenge Urgesetz ist, ohne Ausnahme und übertretung. Alles Werden ist innerhalb des Kreislaufs und der Kraftmenge; also nicht durch falsche Analogie die werdenden und vergehenden Kreisläufe z.B. der Gestirne oder Ebbe und Fluth Tag und Nacht Jahreszeiten zur Charakteristik des ewigen Kreislaufs zu verwenden.⁵⁷

In the elaboration of the thought of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche writes that what recurs infinitely is the *Kreislauf*.⁵⁹ The fact that the *Kreislauf* is *nicht geworden* is criticized by some commentators such as Lukács⁶⁰ to claim that Nietzsche’s philosophy is ultimately a form of Platonism since its fundamental structures do not become but are eternal. It is probable, however, that Lukács’ reading on this precise point is too punctual and does not take into account enough all of Nietzsche’s writings on the nature of the *Kreislauf* and its relation to Becoming. This passage is interesting because it makes use of the concept of *Kreislauf* that was so prevalent in Schelling’s and Hegel’s nature

⁵⁷ KSA 9, 11 [150].

⁵⁸ KSA 9, 11 [157].

⁵⁹ See KSA 13, 14 [188].

⁶⁰ See Lukács, *Zerstörung der Vernunft*, p.333, Neuwied, Berlin, Luchterhand, 1962-1986.

philosophies.⁶¹ But these are not the only references that have to be kept in mind when considering the concept of *Kreislauf* and its influence on Nietzsche's understanding of Becoming. Nietzsche was familiar with Molleschott's materialistic account of the organic world in the 1850-published book *Kreislauf des Lebens*⁶² and this had an influence on his understanding of the *Kreislauf*.

The *Kreislauf* is the process whereby the inorganic becomes conscious and self-conscious in Schelling's nature philosophy. It is also the way in which nature becomes aware of itself and develops a history according to the great teachings of German Idealism. It is interesting that for Nietzsche, the *Kreislauf* is "nichts Gewordenes". This means that Nietzsche wishes to differentiate between the *Kreislauf* and Becoming, which seems at least intuitively strange. This is the case because the *Kreislauf* is what *becomes* what changes, yet stays the same. In any case, Nietzsche mentions that the *Kreislauf* is eternal and that it has no purpose. This characterization is reminiscent of the early Nietzsche's understanding of Becoming in which Nietzsche claimed that Becoming was absolute and eternal.

Nietzsche draws attention to the fact that an infinite Becoming is a contradiction:

Das unendlich neue Werden ist ein Widerspruch, es würde eine unendlich wachsende Kraft voraussetzen. Aber wovon sollte sie wachsen! Woher sich ernähren, mit Überschuß ernähren! Die Annahme, das All sei ein Organism, widerstreitet dem Wesen des Organischen.⁶³

⁶¹ One among many references to the *Kreislauf* in Schelling's work can be found in *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799). III, p.53 quoted from Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Schriften*, 14 Bde. hrsg. v. K. F. A. Schelling, Stuttgart/Augsburg 1856 ff. (zitiert I - XIV), for Hegel, the main and most famous reference to the *Kreislauf* is the one given in Chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

⁶² This familiarity of Nietzsche's with *Kreislauf des Lebens* is proved by the fact that this book was on his reading list in the text notes for his projected doctoral dissertation called *Die Teleologie seit Kant*.

⁶³ KSA 9, 11 [213].

Here, Nietzsche refers to an important argument which he uses in connection with the eternal recurrence of the same and which I will examine more closely in section 2.3. This argument claims that forces cannot be infinite or grow infinitely. Similarly, Nietzsche argues from the fact that the quantity of matter and states in the universe is finite and that time is infinite to give a cosmological justification of the eternal recurrence of the same. The structure of the whole passage is also important because it shows how Nietzsche argues for eternal recurrence: since an infinitely new Becoming is a contradiction (*Widerspruch*), this will entail that all Becoming has to revert back on itself and recur indefinitely.

The next citation conceptualizes Becoming in terms of the related notions of succession (*Nacheinander*) and co-existence (*Nebeneinander*):

Im absoluten Werden kann die Kraft nie ruhen, nie Unkraft sein: „langsame und schnelle Bewegung derselben“ mißt sich nicht an einer Einheit, welche da fehlt [...] Ohne Nacheinander und ohne Nebeneinander giebt es für uns kein Werden, keine Vielheit wir könnten nur behaupten, jenes continuum sei eins, ruhig, unwandelbar, kein Werden, ohne Zeit und Raum. Aber das ist eben nur der menschliche Gegensatz.⁶⁴

Nietzsche also mentions here the possibility of an absolute Becoming (*absoluten Werden*). Nietzsche claims that Becoming cannot be constituted by a movement of points or by *Ruhestrecken*. Rather the movement of Becoming has to be compared to that of a wheel. There are in a wheel two different movements: that of the outer periphery and that of the inner periphery. The inner periphery moves faster than the outer periphery, but both are always in movement as long as the wheel moves. The notion of absolute Becoming which is present in the early period of Nietzsche's thought especially in the "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks", is used to explain that forces are always at play in Becoming and that there cannot be a non-force (*Unkraft*). Becoming thus seems

even more complicated than first explained by the wheel analogy since Nietzsche claims that there is no unity in Becoming that would allow us to measure the faster and slower movement (of the wheel that is in Becoming). Nietzsche affirms that in order for there to be Becoming there has to be succession (*Nacheinander*) and coexistence (*Nebeneinander*). Finally Nietzsche claims that there could not be any Becoming without space and time. But this is, according to him, only a human antithesis (*Gegensatz*).

Nietzsche writes about the connection between the concepts of identity, Becoming and error:

Denn Übel und Schmerz sind nur Folgen des Vorstellens, und daß das Vorstellen eine ewige und allgemeine Eigenschaft alles Seins ist, ob es überhaupt dauernde Eigenschaften geben kann, ob nicht das Werden alles Gleiche und Bleibende ausschließt, außer in der Form des Irrthums und Scheins, während das Vorstellen selber ein Vorgang ohne Gleiches und Dauerndes ist? Ist der Irrthum entstanden als Eigenschaft des Seins? Irren ist dann ein fortwährendes Werden und Wechseln? ⁶⁴

Nietzsche connects his thesis about Becoming to what is identical and what stays the same (*Gleiche and Bleibende*). He does not make an assertion about identity and Becoming but rather asks a question: whether Becoming does not exclude all that is identical and stays the same? This problem of the logical identity will be dealt with at greater length in section 2.1. The previous passage has a similar structure to another⁶⁵ in which Nietzsche claims that knowledge and Becoming mutually exclude each other (*schliessen sich aus*). But here the connection between Becoming and identity remains open for decision because of the structure used which is that of the question. Another reason why this text is important, is because Nietzsche connects Becoming to the concept of error. Nietzsche believes that our knowledge is fundamentally fallible and dependent

⁶⁴ KSA 9, 11 [281].

⁶⁵ KSA 9, 11 [321].

⁶⁶ KSA 12, 9 [89].

on the nature of our organs of perception. This is what will lead me to affirm that Nietzsche seems to possess a naturalistic epistemology although his epistemology cannot be qualified as purely naturalistic.⁶⁷ The idea of the error as more fundamental than truth in the theory of knowledge is thus very important.

Conclusion

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, the concept of Becoming is present although it appears a lot less frequently in the second period of Nietzsche's writings. The traces of the concept of Becoming that are still identifiable are associated with a natural Becoming that is not unlike Darwin's evolution. This is not surprising in itself since, as many scholars have argued,⁶⁸ the second phase of Nietzsche's thought is associated with more positivistic and naturalistic considerations. However, Nietzsche is not a straight-out Darwinist. The resemblances to Darwin are somewhat superficial. Lukács has argued in his *Destruction of Reason*,⁶⁹ that Nietzsche's philosophy could be construed as an inverted form of Darwinism, a form of survival of the "weakest". I think

⁶⁷ See section 1.4 Nietzsche's Epistemology.

⁶⁸ There are too many names to quote here in connection to this hypothesis: Müller-Lauter, Danto, Leiter and Richardson are only a few names that may be associated with this position. There is a virtual consensus in the contemporary Nietzsche-literature that Nietzsche's thought can be divided into three phases, with the middle one being *Aufklärerisch* and positivistic.

⁶⁹ Lukács, *op.cit.*, pp.324-326.

that Lukács underestimates, perhaps, Nietzsche's polemic with Herbert Spencer who is the prime representative of Social Darwinism. But for my purposes the debate as to whether Nietzsche is a Social Darwinist (or an inverted one) is not so important.

As far as the concept of Becoming is concerned, Nietzsche does begin to remove the idea of purpose in nature from his account of Becoming. This is seen in his rejection of the two-world metaphysical scheme that he still accepted in the first phase of his thought and which was inherited from Schopenhauer. In the second phase of his thought, Nietzsche is definitely opposed to such a two-world or back-world theory (*Hinterwelt*). However, what we still need to clarify is whether Nietzsche does not merely remove teleology from Becoming qua physical and natural process at this point in his analysis. This thesis has to be moderated by the fact that there is a reference to Hegel in this part of Nietzsche's writings. Thus, Becoming is also conceived in terms of history even in this second phase of his writings which is allegedly more positivistic and naturalistic. It is important to notice that the notion of the dead-state (*totten Zustand* which will become the *End-Zustand*) of Becoming which will play such a predominant part in the third phase of Nietzsche's thought in the proofs of eternal recurrence already makes its appearance here in *KSA* 9, 11 [150].

In this case we have to examine the possibility of a form of continuity between the first, Romantic phase of Nietzsche's thought and the third more mature phase of this thought.

1.3 Philological and Chronological Analysis of References to Becoming in the Writings of Nietzsche's Late Period (1883-1888)

In this section, I will be interested in analyzing Nietzsche's magnum opus *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the writings and the *Nachlass* that surround it in terms of the fundamental category of Becoming. I will also examine the totality of the published writings of the late period of Nietzsche's thought and the *Nachlass* that is associated with it. In speaking of a late period of Nietzsche's thought, I follow the division that is traditionally accepted in Nietzsche scholarship,⁷⁰ although as I claimed before, I believe that these divisions should be taken heuristically and not absolutely.⁷¹

a) Becoming in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

The starting point for the analysis of *Zarathustra* is the thought of eternal recurrence. I believe this thought to be the center around which all of *Zarathustra* gravitates. The aim of the thought of recurrence is to redeem humans from revenge. To heal humans from the rift of time and its "It was" lies at the heart of Nietzsche's great thinking and intellectual adventure. But to redeem humans from "metaphysical" revenge (Heidegger) and their inability to will backwards is to set humans *free*. Eternal recurrence sets humans free insofar as it transfigures reality. This reality *is not* but *becomes*. This brings us to Becoming. It is my thesis that Nietzsche articulates a "metaphysics" of Becoming. Nietzsche completes the Western project known as metaphysics (Heidegger) but he undoes this project at the same time as he completes it.

⁷⁰ See Nietzsche entry for *Atlas de la philosophie*, pp.177-179, Peter Kunzmann, Franz-Peter Burkard and Franz Wiedman, Librairie Générale Française, Paris, 1993.

⁷¹ See pp.44 and 146 of this dissertation where I also make this claim.

In order to step beyond Plato and the Western metaphysical tradition, Nietzsche must give up Being in favor of Becoming. Being is over-charged with two thousand five hundred years of moral and metaphysical sediment. Thus Nietzsche recurs to Becoming in order to free up thought from its fetters.

Thus spoke Zarathustra is Nietzsche's *magnum opus*. It is Gianni Vattimo's thesis⁷² that Nietzsche does not come into his own until *Zarathustra*. For Vattimo, *Human, All-too-Human* and even the *Genealogy of Morals* are still intent on recounting a history of the West that does not fully overcome Hegelian phenomenologico-dialectical elements. With *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche achieves a breakthrough as his correspondence bears witness: "Inzwischen, im Grunde, in ganz wenig Tage, habe ich mein bestes Buch geschrieben..."⁷³

It will be the aim of this section to determine what Nietzsche's breakthrough consists in. We will analyze this breakthrough by considering how it sheds light on the fundamental category of Becoming. Nietzsche writes:

Aber so will's mein schaffender Wille, mein Schicksal. Oder, dass ich's euch redlicher sage: solches Schicksal gerade will mein Wille. Alles Fühlende leidet an mir und ist in Gefängnissen: aber mein Wollen kommt mir stets als mein Befreier und Freudebringer. Wollen befreit: das ist die wahre Lehre von Wille und Freiheit - so lehrt sie euch Zarathustra.⁷⁴

Heidegger believes that the eternal return of the same is the culmination of a metaphysics of the will that eternally wills its own will. This last thesis allows Heidegger to reduce Nietzsche's position to that of Schelling in the *Philosophical Investigation Concerning the Nature of Human Freedom and its Object*. Nietzsche places in the mouth of his

⁷² Vattimo, G., *Il soggetto e la maschera*, pp.78-79, Bompiani, Milano, 1974. This whole theme is developed in the essay *Metafisica et smascheramento*.

⁷³ "In between, actually in a very few days, I have written my best book,..." Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, 1. Februar 1883, *Sämtliche Briefe, Kritische Studien Ausgabe, Band 6*, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York 1986, Brief 372, p.324.

⁷⁴ *Za II, Auf den glückseligen Inseln*, (KSA 4, p.111).

purest and greatest advocate the following statement: “Denn *dass der Mensch erlöst werde von der Rache*: das ist mir die Brücke zur höchsten Hoffnung und ein Regenbogen nach lange Unwettern.”⁷⁵ We can take Zarathustra to be the *Fürsprecher* of Nietzsche⁷⁶ and we can claim that for Nietzsche the ultimate, “metaphysical” goal is to free humans from revenge. But this freeing of humans from revenge is achieved through the teaching of the doctrine of eternal recurrence and of the overman. By willing the eternal recurrence of the same, humans free themselves from the arrow of time and manage, in a way, to reverse the flow of time.

A bit further in the second part of *Zarathustra* (Von der Erlösung), Nietzsche writes:

Wille –so heisst der Befreier und Freudebringer: also lehrte ich euch, meine Freunde! Und nun lernt diess hinzu: der Wille selber ist noch ein Gefangener. Wollen befreit: aber wie heisst das, was auch den Befreier noch in Ketten schlägt? ‘Es war’: also heisst des Willens Zähneknirsche und einsamste Trübsal. Ohnmächtig gegen das, was gethan ist - ist er allem Vergangenen ein bösen Zuschauer. Nicht zurück kann der Wille wollen; dass er die Zeit nicht brechen kann und der Zeit Begierde, - das ist des Willens einsamste Trübsal [...] Also wurde der Wille, der Befreier, ein Wehethäter: und an allem, was leiden kann, nimmt er Rache dafür, dass er nicht zurück kann. Diess, ja diess allein ist *Rache* selber: des Willens Widerwille gegen die Zeit und ihr ‘Es war’.

Time flows forward and this constitutes humanity’s fundamental slavery, the inability of its will to will backwards in time. Revenge is conceived metaphysically in Nietzsche as a human’s willing to avenge himself against time and its “it was”. But the eternal recurrence of the same is not the highest manifestation of the will. By willing the eternal recurrence of the same, humans exert their will but this will wills simultaneously Being

⁷⁵ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *Za II, Von den Taranteln*, (KSA 4, p.128).

⁷⁶ It is true that this transition from Zarathustra’s point of view to Nietzsche’s own views is not as straightforward as might seem. It pertains to the problem of the authorship of *Zarathustra* and of the narrative voices that are at play in Nietzsche’s *opus*. My thesis can thus be reduced to the claim that when Zarathustra speaks of the redemption of humans from revenge he is actually *speaking for* Nietzsche and with Nietzsche’s authorial authority.

and Becoming and is shattered as unitary, primordial will. The free Becoming of the will is characterized in relation to the coming and going of all things. Becoming is a coming and going of time that is willed by the will. But what the will wills according to Nietzsche is this pure Becoming.

The return of the moment is what is desired but the will to recurrence cannot arrest the will in Being. Will is not primal Being but infinite Becoming. If this infinite Becoming must bring back the moments of a finite existence, it brings them back as both Being and Becoming. Nietzsche is a thinker of Being and Becoming although a priority is ascribed by him to Becoming. Will as will to power becomes free to will the eternal recurrence of its Becoming. This is the case because in the moment when humans will recurrence they simultaneously will that Becoming return (as Deleuze says “Revenir, l’être de tout ce qui devient.”⁷⁷) and that this Becoming be transformed and transfigured into something higher: into Being. But the two moments are equally important: there is Being, stability and permanence as a result of eternal recurrence but there is also Becoming, change and impermanence that is lodged in the *core* of eternal recurrence.

As Nietzsche writes, and this makes Heidegger’s reference to a primal Being that eternally wills the eternity of its own will problematical:

Von Ohngefähr’- das ist der älteste Adel der Welt, den gab ich allen Dingen zurück, ich erlöste sie von der Knechtschaft unter dem Zwecke. Diese Freiheit und Himmel-Heiterkeit stellte ich gleich azurner Glocke über alle Dinge, als ich lehrte, dass über ihnen und durch sie kein ‘ewiger Wille’-will.⁷⁸

Ultimately, the eternal recurrence is about both Being and Becoming but I believe that a priority should be ascribed to Becoming. The repetition or recurrence of an event or a structure pre-supposes a moment of stability or so it seems. It is my suggestion that we

⁷⁷ Deleuze, G., *op.cit.*, p.54.

⁷⁸ *Za III, Vor Sonnen-Aufgang, (KSA 4, p.209).*

should try to conceptualize recurrence in terms of dynamism and Becoming rather than stability, actuality and Being. This is what I mean when I claim that a priority should be ascribed to the concept of Becoming when trying to understand what eternal recurrence means. In fact this anticipates my discussion on p.173 of the way Aristotle gave priority to actuality as opposed to potentiality in his discussion of Becoming. It is my belief that Nietzsche inverts Aristotle's categories to a certain extent and thinks recurrence from the potential aspect of Becoming. This does not mean that the recurrence is not eternal of course: what recurs eternally is the dynamic, and changing nature of Becoming.

Eternal recurrence mediates between the concepts of Being and Becoming in Nietzsche's thought although, ultimately, for Nietzsche, Becoming is more important than Being. In the eternal recurrence of the same, man encounters his own will both as an illusion and as that through which the ultimate freeing can be attained. Nietzsche's concept of freedom is related to his notion of "creation". It is perhaps the case that for Nietzsche (read along with Sartre) the "death of God" represents the historical event that forces and determines man to be free.

Nietzsche writes, in the section called Von der Selbst-Überwindung of *Zarathustra*: "Euren Willen und eure Werthe setzt ihr auf den Fluss des Werdens; einen alten Willen zur Macht verräth mir, was vom Volke als gut und böse geglaubt wird." Thus the will is essentialized and projected onto the river of Becoming as a valuation according to Nietzsche. Good and evil, the will and the highest values are traditionally associated with the concept of Being. But for Nietzsche, the positing of values out of will to power amounts to a projection onto Becoming (or the river of Becoming to use the language of *Zarathustra*). Nietzsche writes a bit further in *Zarathustra* (Von der Selbst-Überwindung): "Nicht der Fluss ist eure Gefahr und das Ende eures Guten und Bösen; ihr Weisesten: sondern jener Wille selber, der Wille zur Macht-der unerschöpfte

zeugende Lebens-Wille.” Thus will to power is understood as a life-will that is distinguished from Becoming (the river). This seems to go against Heidegger’s thesis that will to power is a way for Nietzsche to re-think the concept of Becoming. There is evidence for this anti-Heideggerian position in Nietzsche’s *Nachlass*: “der Wille zur Macht, nicht ein Sein, nicht ein Werden, sondern ein Pathos ist die elementarste Tatsache aus der sich erst ein Werden, ein Wirken ergibt...”⁷⁹ Heidegger famously associated will to power to Becoming and eternal recurrence to Being and then tried to unify these thoughts in order to complete the Western project known as metaphysics.⁸⁰

It is true that will to power is associated with life and Becoming as the following quote testifies: “Wo ich Lebendiges fand, da fand ich Willen zur Macht; und noch im Willen des Dienenden fand ich den Willen, Herr zu sein.”⁸¹ I do not believe, however, that it is plausible to reduce will to power, life and Becoming to the same thing. Nietzsche develops a metaphysics of Becoming. Insofar as he uses the concepts of life and will to power to articulate the concept of Becoming and to oppose it to the traditional metaphysical concepts of inside, transcendence and ultimate reality, it is practical to use these concepts to clarify the concept of Becoming. However, we must differentiate carefully between life, will to power and Becoming.

The thesis that ultimately Being is higher than Becoming in Nietzsche’s philosophy has been defended by both Jaspers and Lukács it is possible that Jaspers influenced Lukács since his work appeared first in 1935. This can be clearly seen in the following passage from Jaspers’ *Nietzschebuch*:

Philosophically, Nietzsche’s view of becoming must be understood as a way of thinking in which all determinateness is transcended

⁷⁹ KSA 13, 14 [79]

⁸⁰ Ernst Behler, *Nietzsche-Derrida, Derrida-Nietzsche, Confrontations*, p.23, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988.

⁸¹ *Za II, Von der Selbst-Überwindung*, (KSA 4, pp.147-148).

and in which space itself and all forms of objective being are absorbed by time, while time becomes synonymous with being itself so that it alone is left as it were.⁸²

This reading operates by ascribing a priority to the eternal recurrence of the same over will to power and by making use of the following statements enunciated by Nietzsche in the fragments of the *Will to Power*: “to stamp onto Becoming the character of Being that is the highest will to power” and “that everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of Becoming to a world of Being: - high point of the meditation”⁸³ I discuss this quote more in sub-section e) of this chapter. Some specifications should be given about permanence and stability and how I understand these terms. To put it simplistically permanence refers to “lastingness” through time. Similarly stability refers to the relative duration in time of a given process. These are not necessarily metaphysical absolutes although the way this terminology has been handed down to us from the metaphysical tradition does imply a certain connection to a spatial and temporal absolute.

This quote functions in such a way as to emphasize the permanentization of Becoming into Being. Becoming is fixed and shaped into the permanence and stability of Being through the stamping and the application of the will to power. Thus will to power and the eternal recurrence must be related to the fundamental concept of the permanentization of Becoming.

The experience of eternal recurrence is an experience of Being for Jaspers and this is why ultimately Being has priority over Becoming according to him. While there is some plausibility to this claim, I believe that it places Nietzsche too much within the Western metaphysical tradition that he was combating. If Being is superior to Becoming

⁸² Jaspers, K., *op.cit.*, p.350.

⁸³ *Will to Power*, 617 (KSA 12, 7 [54]). This is the famous quote that is used by Heidegger to establish the relationship between will to power and eternal recurrence. Peter Gast added the title of *Rekapitulation* to this passage and Heidegger was unaware of this at the time of his interpretation which makes some scholars such as D'Iorio et Krell doubt the philological grounding of Heidegger's interpretation.

for Nietzsche, what is to differentiate him from Plato and the rest of the Western metaphysical tradition? There are elements in the Nietzschean *corpus* that suggest that he believed that knowledge of Becoming was impossible and that knowledge was only possible based on a belief in Being.⁸⁴

But I think that Nietzsche went beyond the Platonic tradition and did not merely remain entrenched in Platonism. Insofar as he does this, Nietzsche must give up Being because it is overcharged with centuries of metaphysical, historical and moral sediments. Being has been thought and re-thought in history: it is perhaps the hidden ground of Western history. Insofar as he has broken with the ontological tradition, Nietzsche has freed thought for the realm of Becoming. But this freeing up of thought still leaves us with some problems. Once Becoming and impermanence get affirmed, how are we to find stability in reality? Nietzsche has been incapable of providing a critique of Becoming because he was liberating Becoming and the tradition from Being. But the task after Nietzsche becomes to criticize the concept of Becoming and see what consequences it has for ontology and history.

Heidegger has managed to unify the concepts of will to power and eternal recurrence in at least two ways. The first focuses on an association between will to power and *essentia* and eternal recurrence and *existentia*. This is the move that has been attacked the most vigorously in the secondary literature.⁸⁵ But the more interesting

⁸⁴ KSA 12, 9 [89].

⁸⁵ This attack has mainly been put forth by Müller-Lauter. Müller-Lauter's critique of Heidegger's conceptualization of will to power and eternal recurrence in terms of *essentia* and *existentia* is subtle. Thus he writes: "Heidegger sucht darzulegen, 'wie in Nietzsches Metaphysik der Unterschied von *essentia* und *existentia* verschwindet, warum er verschwinden muss am Ende der Metaphysik, wie gleichwohl gerade so die weiteste Entfernung vom Anfang erreicht ist' (Nietzsche, a.a.O. [Anm. 13], II, 476)...Im Zusammenhang seiner metaphysikgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen versteht Heidegger den Willen zur Macht als *essentia*, die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen als *existentia*. [...] Wenn es sich um ein 'Verschwinden' handelt, dann gilt allerdings Heideggers im zitierten Zusammenhang vorgebrachter Satz, dass sich ein solches Verschwinden 'nur zeigen' lasse, 'indem versucht wird, den Unterschied sichtbar zu machen'." Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsches Lehre des Willens zur Macht*, in *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1999, note 64, p.47.

attempt at unification between will to power and eternal recurrence focuses on what Heidegger has termed the “permanentization of Becoming”. Will to power and eternal recurrence are metaphysically unified because they both refer alternatively to the “permanentization of Becoming”. What does it mean that Becoming must be and become permanentized? For Heidegger the permanentization of Becoming is thought in terms of the question of Being.

In his work of maturity, Nietzsche articulates his fundamental doctrines of will to power, the eternal recurrence of the same and the *Übermensch*. Zarathustra is at once the teacher of will to power, the eternal recurrence of the same and the *Übermensch*. But the teaching of the eternal recurrence is perhaps the most difficult teaching that must be taught by Zarathustra and this is effectively dramatized by Nietzsche in his *magnum opus*.

I see in the teaching of the eternal recurrence a teaching that is not selective as is sometimes affirmed by Nietzsche,⁸⁶ but a teaching that affirms human freedom. In the eternal recurrence of the same, the will encounters itself as unity and singularity, but at the same time as illusion. The fiction and illusion of recurrence is affirmative of freedom. Every single individual encounters his destiny in the thought of recurrence and at the same time feels impelled to create this destiny, this *fatum*, freely.

For Nietzsche what is eternal or immutable (*Unvergängliche*) is only an allegory or a parable: “Alles Unvergängliche das ist nur ein Gleichniss! Und die Dichter lügen zuviel. — Aber von Zeit und Werden sollen die besten Gleichnisse reden: ein Lob sollen sie sein und eine Rechtfertigung aller Vergänglichkeit!”⁸⁷ Nietzsche believes that these allegories about the immutable are due to the lies of the poets. But he claims that the best

⁸⁶ *KSA* 10, 24 [7], *WP* 1058.

⁸⁷ *Za II, Auf den glückseligen Inseln*, (*KSA* 4, p.110).

allegories should speak about time and Becoming. These allegories should be according to Nietzsche a praise and a justification of everything that passes away.

The following citation is important because it establishes a relationship between the concepts of Becoming and those of purpose and absence of purpose:

„Dass ich Kampf sein muss und Werden und Zweck und der Zwecke Widerspruch: ach, wer meinen Willen erräth, erräth wohl auch, auf welchen *krummen* Wegen er gehen muss! „Was ich auch schaffe und wie ich's auch liebe, bald muss ich Gegner ihm sein und meiner Liebe: so will es mein Wille.“⁸⁸

The context of this passage is important. Zarathustra recounts that these are the words that life spoke to him once. It is acknowledged in this passage, that life must be purpose, Becoming, and absence of purpose all at the same time.

Nietzsche connects the concept of Becoming indirectly with dancing gods and the supreme dancing god, which is represented by Dionysos:

Wo alles Werden mich Götter-Tanz und Götter-Muthwillen dünkte, und die Welt los - und ausgelassen und zu sich selber zurückfliehend: - als ein ewiges Sich-fliehn und –Wiedersuchen vieler Güter, als das selige Sich-Wiedersprechen, Sich-Wiederhören, Sich-Wieder-Zugehören vieler Götter:[...] ⁸⁹

The linguistic structure of this passage is reminiscent of the passage in *Will to Power* 1067.⁹⁰ That passage (*Will to Power* 1067) is chronologically subsequent to the publication of Zarathustra (according to Kaufmann's chronology it is dated of the year 1885). In that passage it is the world that is a chaos of self-contradiction.

While I believe that Nietzsche in fact develops a metaphysics of Becoming, there are passages in Nietzsche's *corpus* that could make one believe that he ultimately wishes to ascribe an ascendancy to Being over Becoming. This is apparent in the following citation: "...gesetzt Alles ist Werden, so ist Erkenntnis nur möglich auf Grund des

⁸⁸ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *Za II*, *Von der Selbst-Überwindung*, (KSA 4, p.148).

⁸⁹ *Za III*, *Von alten und neuen Tafeln*, I, (KSA 4, pp.247-248).

Glaubens an Sein.”⁹¹ Here Nietzsche explicitly claims that knowledge is only possible on the basis of a belief in Being. Thus this citation also confirms that knowledge is connected to Being and that Being might have priority for Nietzsche over Becoming.

b) Becoming in *On a Genealogy of Morals*

The next passage is very famous and it problematizes the existence of Being as opposed to Becoming. As Nietzsche claims there is only the deed, there is no “doer” (subject) behind this deed:

Aber es giebt kein solches Substrat; es giebt kein „Sein“ hinter dem Thun, Wirken, Werden ; „der Thäter“ ist zum Thun bloss hinzugedichtet, das Thun ist Alles. Das Volk verdoppelt im Grunde das Thun, wenn es den Blitz leuchten lässt, das ist ein Thun-Thun: es setzt dasselbe Geschehen einmal als Ursache und dann noch einmal als deren Wirkung.⁹²

Nietzsche makes the claim that there is no Being behind Becoming. Thus this passage provides evidence for the reading according to which Being is thoroughly given up in favor of Becoming in Nietzsche’s thought. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, there are also passages that seem to indicate that Nietzsche wants to preserve the concept of Being in his philosophy. But at the end of the examination of all the passages in Nietzsche’s published works and in the *Nachlass*, we will have to decide which one of these readings is more substantiated. My position is that Nietzsche returns to Heraclitus and the concept of Becoming. In this way, Nietzsche has already stepped behind the Platonic affirmation of Being as Idea. Unlike Heidegger, I do not believe that Nietzsche remains entrenched in

⁹⁰ KSA 11, 38 [12].

⁹¹ KSA 12, 2 [91].

⁹² GM, *Erste Abhandlung*, 13, (KSA 5, p.279).

Platonism and only completes the Western concept of Being. When Nietzsche affirms: “Sofern die Sinne das Werden, das Vergehen, den Wechsel zeigen, lügen sie nicht ...*Aber damit wird Heraklit ewig Recht behalten, dass das Sein eine leere Fiktion ist.* Die „scheinbare“ Welt ist die einzige: die „wahre Welt“ ist nur hinzugelogen”⁹³

He undoes the stamping of Being unto Becoming as the supreme will to power. The supreme will to power affirms the eternal recurrence of Becoming since Being is “eine leere Fiktion”.

This is the major flaw in Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche: he reads him starting from Parmenides and Plato instead of starting from Heraclitus. The concept of Becoming, as a non-teleological and anti-dialectical notion allows us to think through the unity of Nietzsche’s thought. Instead of focusing on concepts such as the eternal recurrence and the will to power which appear only late in the Nietzsche’s opus, Becoming allows us to understand Nietzsche’s ontological preoccupations which were there in the beginning with “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks” and which are also there at the end of his philosophical career. Of course, I am not claiming that eternal recurrence and will to power have to be dismissed as Nietzsche’s fundamental concepts. But much is to be gained by focusing on Becoming and seeing how it relates to the other Nietzschean fundamental concepts.

Nietzsche associates the concept of the ascetic ideal with a longing away (*Verlangen hinweg*) from Becoming:

Man kann sich schlechterdings nicht verbergen, was eigentlich jenes ganze Wollen ausdrückt, das vom asketischen Ideale her seine Richtung bekommen hat [...] dieses Verlangen hinweg aus allem Schein, Wechsel, Werden, Tod, Wunsch, Verlangen selbst das Alles bedeutet, wagen wir es, dies zu begreifen, einen Willen zum Nichts, einen Widerwillen gegen das Leben, eine

⁹³ [italics my emphasis, underlined is Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *GD, Die “Vernunft” in der Philosophie*, 2 (KSA 6, p.75).

Auflehnung gegen die grundsätzlichen Voraussetzungen des Lebens, aber es ist und bleibt ein Wille!... Und, um es noch zum Schluss zu sagen, was ich Anfangs sagte: lieber will noch der Mensch das Nichts wollen, als nicht wollen...⁹⁴

Thus, Nietzsche asserts that belief in the ascetic ideal constitutes a desire (*Verlangen*) away from Becoming and a willing of nothingness. This willing of nothingness is often associated in Nietzsche's thought with the concept of nihilism. Nietzsche claims that the opposite of Being is not non-Being, as has been claimed almost universally in the Western metaphysical tradition, but non-Becoming.⁹⁵

c) Becoming in *Twilight of the Idols*

Nietzsche claims that our senses betray us with respect to the "true" world. Given what we know about Nietzsche's position in the History of an Error, we should perhaps interpret this passage ironically:

Diese Sinne, *die auch sonst so unmoralisch sind*, sie betrügen uns über die *wahre* Welt. Moral: loskommen von dem Sinnentzug, vom Werden, von der Historie, von der Lüge, Historie ist nichts als Glaube an die Sinne, Glaube an die Lüge. Moral: Neinsagen zu Allem, was den Sinnen Glauben schenkt, zum ganzen Rest der Menschheit: das ist Alles „Volk“.⁹⁶

Here, Nietzsche's "phenomenalism" comes into view. Nietzsche believes that insofar as philosophers have distrusted the senses they have "falsified" knowledge.⁹⁷ Insofar as philosophers have held that there is a world of Being that does not become, they have defended a false belief. Nietzsche thinks that there is another falsification of knowledge that occurs. It is true that the senses show us that there seems to be some stability. A

⁹⁴ *GM, Dritte Abhandlung*, 28, (*KSA* 5, p.412).

⁹⁵ See *KSA* 12, 9 [63].

⁹⁶ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *GD, Die "Vernunft" in der Philosophie*, 1, (*KSA* 6, pp.74-75).

⁹⁷ This term is not used here and in the following passages in a way similar to Popper's technical usage of the term.

river flows but the existence of the river and that the entity river perdures is a fact. It is this fact which Nietzsche takes to be a “falsification” of our senses.

According to him, there is only a Heraclitean flux and no stability or permanence. While it is true that for Heraclitus the natural and metaphysical opposites are unified by and in the *logos*, it is also true that “War is the father of all things”. The strife of Being and Becoming is radical. Reality is a flux that exists and proceeds without determination. The claim that Nietzsche is a Heraclitean is further attested by the following passage: “Sofern die Sinne das Werden, das Vergehen, den Wechsel zeigen, lügen sie nicht ... *Aber damit wird Heraklit ewig Recht behalten, dass das Sein eine leere Fiktion ist. Die „scheinbare“ Welt ist die einzige: die „wahre Welt“ ist nur hinzugelogen*”⁹⁸ This idea that Being is an empty fiction sustains my thesis that Nietzsche’s is a philosophy of Becoming. Also this quote that invokes Heraclitus 15 years after the unpublished text “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks”, may lead us to think that there is a deep continuity between the early phase of Nietzsche’s thought and the late phase of his thought. The problem with the early phase is that Becoming is associated with semblance and that Being is the semblance of semblance (*Schein des Scheins*). In the early phase of his thought Nietzsche still accepts a dualistic, two-world theory that is inherited from Schopenhauer. The world is will and representation. Will is Becoming and Being is representation. As Nietzsche’s thought evolves, the world of Being, of truth is criticized and given up, and this is done through a radicalization of the concept of Becoming. In the late philosophy, Nietzsche attains a metaphysical monism of Becoming despite Heidegger’s claim the will to power is the ground of Being.

⁹⁸ [italics my emphasis, underlined is Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *GD, Die “Vernunft” in der Philosophie*, 2 (KSA 6, p.75).

d) The Stamping of Being onto Becoming: Falsification (*Fälschung*) and Stamping (*Prägung*): KSA 12, 7 [54]

An important passage that Heidegger makes use of is *Will to Power* 617 (KSA 12,

7 [54]) and that is of the utmost relevance for our inquiry is the following:

Dem Werden den Charakter des Seins *aufzuprägen* - das ist der höchste *Wille zur Macht*. *Zweifache Fälschung*, von den Sinnen her und vom Geiste her, um eine Welt des Seienden zu erhalten, des Verharrenden, Gleichwertigen usw. *Das Alles wiederkehrt, ist die extremste Annäherung einer Welt des Werdens und die des Seins: Gipfel der Betrachtung.*

This quote functions in Heidegger's reading in such a way as to emphasize the

"permanentization", as it were, of Becoming into Being. Becoming is fixed, shaped and stamped into the permanence and stability of Being through the stamping and the application of will to power. Thus again will to power and the eternal recurrence must be related to the fundamental concept of the permanentization of Becoming.

I believe that Heidegger has one-sidedly understood the *Fälschung* because he assimilates it to a *Be-ständigkeit des Werdens*. But Becoming is not permanent (*beständig*) for Nietzsche as Heidegger wants to affirm. This permanence that Heidegger derives from Becoming, starting from the circularity of eternal Becoming (the periodicity of the circle pre-supposes according to him some form of sameness and constance) is what I call into question. What returns in the eternal recurrence of the same is not the permanence of Becoming but Becoming as Becoming. There is no sameness and no identity in Becoming, but only change, transformation and transfiguration.

In relation to this, Heidegger affirms that the will to power fixes itself goals that it always overcomes. But he concludes that the will to power must be finite: "Das ziel-los ewige Machten des Willens zur Macht ist nun aber zugleich in seinen Lagen und Gestalten notwendig *endlich*... (XII, 53)"(Quoted by Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 6/2, p.256 [My emphasis, P.C.]

But I believe that we can affirm that for Nietzsche Becoming, though not permanent, is in-finite, absolute and eternal. But this infinity of Becoming has consequences for the will to power. The will to power is the infinite ironic play of interpretations and perspectives of *Macht-centren*, *Kraft-centren*, *Willens-punktationen*⁹⁹, *Macht-willen*, *Kraft-quanten* and *Macht-quanten*. It is in this infinite ironic play of interpretations that consists the *Fälschung*. This interpretative physics (which could even be called a physical hermeneutics) is very present in Nietzsche and Heidegger neglects it in favor of the unification and identification of the will to power with the eternal recurrence of the same.

The point that needs to be made clearly is that for Nietzsche, the character of Being and the stamping (*Prägung*) is a falsification, a fictionalization. Becoming is contradictory and non-totalizable: it possesses no unity. Becoming is only made of multiplicities, and the identities and unities that seem to occur within Becoming are only illusory: they are the mirages which are conjured up by the will to power.

What recurs is the eternal recurrence of the Becoming of the will to power. With Becoming we can synthesize the will to power and eternal recurrence, but this synthesis is only a fragmented, broken, contradictory and inconsistent synthesis. Such is the nature of Becoming in Nietzsche's thought that it is always opposed to a pure and unitary Being. If we can affirm that for Nietzsche Being is Becoming, this affirmation, which seems to predicate Becoming of Being, immediately moves into its opposite as soon as an instant has gone by: Being is, becoming becomes. Being does not become and Becoming isn't.

These expressions are not merely sophistic or casuistic. They express rather the complexity of the relationship between Being and Becoming in Nietzsche's thought. This complexity is always brought back to contradiction, self-contradiction and perhaps even

⁹⁹ See *KSA* 13, 11 [73].

incoherence. Insofar as coherence pre-supposes the “sticking together” and articulation of a whole, it may be said that Becoming is *in-coherent* in Nietzsche’s philosophy. This is again a way in which Nietzsche attempts to detach and stake out his position as opposed to Hegel. For Hegel, the whole and the system must stick together: they must articulate and divide themselves into particular determinations which are further subsumed into higher unities and syntheses. But for Nietzsche the Whole and Becoming is fragmented and *in-coherent*, it is both *adiaphoristic* (in-determined and in-different) and *chorismatic* (separated, *dis*-united, and dis-integrated).

Being is Becoming, but Being and Becoming do not stick together unitarily. They are only conceivable as a contradiction and a self-contradiction that does not resolve itself and does not pass into its opposite. In this sense, this passage which I have already evoked in section 1.1, is crucial:

Dies erreichte Heraklit durch eine Beobachtung über den eigentlichen Hergang jedes Werdens und Vergehens, welchen er unter der Form der Polarität begriff, als das Auseinandertreten einer Kraft in zwei qualitativ verschiedene, entgegengesetzte und zur Wiedervereinigung strebende Thätigkeiten. Fortwährend entzweit sich eine Qualität mit sich selbst und scheidet sich in ihre Gegensätze wieder zu einander hin.¹⁰⁰

This idea that Becoming has to be understood as a polarity of forces that split themselves into two activities (*Thätigkeiten*) that are qualitatively differentiated is quite important. For Nietzsche these activities and qualities split themselves up perpetually, indefinitely (*fortwährend*) and infinitely. This is already the force-point world of the later physicalist conception that appears in the 1880’s as I have documented it in section 1.3. Becoming is absolute, infinite and eternal in its perpetual transformations and transfigurations. But despite these transformations and transfigurations, no unity and identity is attained.

¹⁰⁰ “Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen”, KSA I, 824.

Becoming is shot-through with multiplicities (*Vielheiten*) and will-punctuations (*Willens-punktuationen*). Temporary unities are attained, but these unities never last. They are always transformed, transfigured, differentiated and split up into never-ending, indefinite and in-finite multiplicities.

This infinity of Becoming must be related to the Romantic concept of irony. Becoming is ironic and does not give itself over simply to Being. The fragmentation, self-contradiction, in-coherence and inconsistency of Becoming in Nietzsche's thought does not prevent us from predicating certain things of Becoming. Some things can be said of Becoming, despite the fact that it is a-teleological and illogical in Nietzsche's formulations.

Becoming is infinite, absolute and eternal. These attributes might seem curious when predicated of Becoming. We usually associate finitude with Becoming and even Being (especially) after Heidegger. But it is my claim that if we are to progress beyond Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, we must recover the infinite, absolute and eternal concept of Becoming that Nietzsche sought to think. These aspects of the infinite, eternal and absolute Becoming are especially present in the early philosophy.¹⁰¹ However, it is my claim that the notion of eternal recurrence of the same has to be conceived starting from Becoming and impermanence and not from Being and presence.

What recurs is the infinite Becoming of the will to power. Through Becoming we can make sense of all four of the rubrics of Nietzsche's thought. Will to power establishes configurations in Becoming. These configurations transform and transfigure themselves but also recur as configurations of Becoming. The *Übermensch* is the man that realizes that he is shot through with Becoming: he accepts to project himself onto the

¹⁰¹ Müller-Lauter has a section in *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*, called *Über den Menschen in einer Welt des 'absoluten' Werdens*. Nietzsche writes: "Die Natur ist nach innen ebenso unendlich als nach aussen: wir gelangen jetzt bis zur Zelle u. zu den Theilen der Zelle: aber giebt es gar keine Grenze, wo man könnte, hier ist der letzte Punkt nach innen, das Werden hört bis ins Unendliche Kleine nie auf. Aber auch im Grössten giebt es nichts absolut Unveränderliches." *Die Vorplatonischen Philosophen*; KGW II 4, 269f.

configurations of Becoming and transforms and transfigures himself by choosing and freely shaping the configurations which he himself chooses to be. Finally nihilism, is the realization that Becoming aims at nothing, that it has no goal and no *telos*. By accepting and affirming the fact that Becoming aims at nothing, it is possible to overcome and leave behind metaphysics which always aimed at something, this something ultimately being domination.

However, it is only by accepting the contradictions and self-contradictions of Becoming that metaphysics can be left behind. As long as Becoming is shaped into Being, there is still a *telos* and this *telos* is the shaping. When we come to accept that the shaping (*Prägung*) is a falsification (*Fälschung*), then we must be led to the conclusion that the shaping has no *telos*, no purpose. By accepting falsification as the highest plastic power of the artist-metaphysician, Nietzsche leaves behind the metaphysics of the will to power and of the will-to-will which is imputed to him by Heidegger.

Nietzsche derives the concept of substance from the subject through a “psycho-ontological” development:

Ehemals nahm man die Veränderung, den Wechsel, das Werden überhaupt als Beweis für Scheinbarkeit, als Zeichen dafür, dass Etwas da sein müsse, das uns irre führe. Heute umgekehrt sehen wir, genau so weit als das Vernunft-Vorurtheil uns zwingt, Einheit, Identität, Dauer, Substanz, Ursache, Dinglichkeit, Sein anzusetzen, uns gewissermassen verstrickt in den Irrthum, *necessitirt* zum Irrthum;¹⁰²

Thus, Nietzsche believes that the concept of Being follows from the concept of I (or ego). This “I” is further reduced to the will and then the concept of the will is itself questioned as mere semblance or fiction. This is Nietzsche’s epistemological pragmatism and epi-phenomenalism. Nietzsche claims that it is a prejudice of reason (*Vernunft-*

¹⁰² [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *GD*, *Die “Vernunft” in der Philosophie*, 5, (*KSA* 6, p.77).

Vorurtheil) that forces us to assert the existence of unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, thing-ness and Being. This in turn pushes into error. This idea of necessitation into error (*necessitirt zum Irrthum*) is a very important concept of Nietzsche's epistemology. Müller-Lauter has commented on it extensively in connection with the concept of *Einverleibung*.¹⁰³ For Nietzsche, humankind incorporates many mistakes over the generations. Those who cannot incorporate these essential mistakes and errors into their memories and bodies die off. The creator of Zarathustra's goal is to help the humans or free spirits to incorporate the teaching of eternal recurrence into their bodies and spirits. That is Nietzsche's highest task and responsibility.

In the same passage, Nietzsche writes:

Das sieht überall Thäter und Thun: das glaubt an Willen als Ursache überhaupt; das glaubt an's „Ich“, an's Ich als Sein, an's Ich als Substanz und *projicirt* den Glauben an die Ich-Substanz auf alle Dinge — es *schafft* erst damit den Begriff „Ding“ ... Das Sein wird überall als Ursache hineingedacht, *untergeschoben*; aus der Conception „Ich“ folgt erst, als abgeleitet, der Begriff „Sein“¹⁰⁴.

This passage shows that Nietzsche believes that the concept of Being is derived from the concept of the “I” or the subject. But this concept of I is itself a fiction. This implies that the concept of Being is also a fiction and that there can be *no stamping of Being onto Becoming* that occurs. The stamping is a *Fälschung*, a fictionalization of Being onto Becoming. A full, coherent notion of Being is rejected in principle by Nietzsche.

For Nietzsche a very important concept is the concept of the innocence of Becoming. The Western metaphysical tradition has ontologized and moralized Becoming by transposing and transforming it into Being. This transformation had theological underpinnings according to Nietzsche since freedom of the will was invented to better

¹⁰³ Müller-Lauter, W., *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 1999, pp.298-301.

¹⁰⁴ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *GD*, *Die „Vernunft“ in der Philosophie*, 5, (*KSA* 6, p.77).

enslave and throw into fetters the disciples who followed this (mainly Christian) belief. Through the invention of freedom of the will, the concept of responsibility was also brought into existence. Since we are free, we have responsibility and not the other way around: this is the claim of Christian theological doctrine according to Nietzsche. Let us hear what Nietzsche has to say in his own words :

Irrthum vom freien Willen. Wir haben heute kein Mitleid mehr mit dem Begriff „freier Wille“: wir wissen nur zu gut, was er ist - das anrühigste Theologen-Kunststück, das es giebt, zum Zweck, die Menschheit in ihrem Sinne „verantwortlich, zu machen, das heisst *sie von sich abhängig zu machen* ... Ich gebe hier nur die Psychologie alles Verantwortlichmachens. Überall, wo Verantwortlichkeiten gesucht werden, pflegt es der Instinkt des *Strafen- und Richten-Wollens* zu sein, der da sucht. Man hat das Werden seiner Unschuld entkleidet, wenn irgend ein So-und-so-Sein auf Wille, auf Absichten, auf Akte der Verantwortlichkeit zurückgeführt wird: die Lehre vom Willen ist wesentlich erfunden zum Zweck der Strafe, das heisst des *Schuldig-finden-wollens*.¹⁰⁵

This next passage also brings out the concept of the innocence of Becoming which plays such an important role in Nietzsche's philosophy. For our own concerns the concept of the innocence of Becoming is important because, by eliminating teleology from Becoming, Nietzsche frees it from its transposition into the concept of Being:

Alles Geschehen, alle Bewegung, alles Werden als ein Feststellen von Grad- und Kraftverhältnissen, als ein *Kampf* [...] Sobald wir uns Jemanden *imaginieren*, der verantwortlich ist dafür, daß wir so und so sind usw. (Gott, Natur), ihm also unsere Existenz, unser Glück und Elend als *Absicht* zulegen, verderben wir uns die *Unschuld des Werdens*. Wir haben dann Jemanden, der durch uns und mit uns etwas erreichen will. Daß die anscheinende „Zweckmäßigkeit“ („*die aller menschlichen Kunst unendlich überlegene Zweckmäßigkeit*“) bloß die Folge jenes in allem Geschehen sich abspielenden *Willens zur Macht* ist daß das *Stärkerwerden* Ordnungen mit sich bringt, die einem Zweckmäßigkeits-Entwurfe ähnlich sehen, daß die anscheinenden *Zwecke* nicht beabsichtigt sind, [...] ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *GD, Die vier grossen Irrthümer*, 7(*KSA* 6, p.95).

¹⁰⁶ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 12, 9 [91].

Nietzsche claims that as soon as we imagine someone that is responsible for the fact that we are constituted in the way we are, we spoil for ourselves the innocence of Becoming. Nietzsche goes on to claim that utility or finality (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) is a consequence of the will to power. This is an important claim since it amounts to saying that the apparent aims or goals (*Zwecke*) are only a by-product of the will to power. Thus there is no aim in the world-Becoming but a constant aggregation and disaggregation of power-wills and force centers (*Kraftcentren*). This substantiates my thesis that Nietzsche's great achievement is to have removed teleology from within Becoming. This discussion is a bit more complex than might first seem. If Being involves "lastingness" through time and permanence, then could we not say that Being and Becoming aim at temporary formations and configurations of power? I am not necessarily opposed to such an account. On this reading, teleology is not global but local. There are local foci and nodes that aim at power, but these formations and configurations are always transformed and transfigured into new formations and configurations.

Perhaps it is not enough to claim that teleology is only local and not global. Traditionally philosophers distinguish between an internal teleology and an external teleology. But it is precisely this difference between the internal and the external that is relativized in Nietzsche's epistemology when he rejects inner sense as more privileged than outer sense. Nevertheless what seems to be left out of the traditional distinction between internal and external teleology is a form of inner and local teleology. But it is precisely the internal and external teleology that Nietzsche has relativized and reduced to the same through the fact that he does not ascribe priority to the inner sense over the outer sense. This perhaps a regression onto Heidegger's position of interpreting the will to power as a single metaphysical grounding principle, but it seems consistent with

Nietzsche's thought and it is attributable to the tension between the doctrines of the will to power and that of nihilism.

The next quote is important because it is reminiscent of Nietzsche's early *Nachlass* surrounding the *Birth of Tragedy*:

In der Mysterienlehre [of the tragic age of the Greeks, P.C.] ist der Schmerz heilig gesprochen: die „Wehen der Gebälerin“ heiligen den Schmerz überhaupt, alles Werden und Wachsen, alles Zukunfts-Verbürgende *bedingt* den Schmerz ... Damit es die ewige Lust des Schaffens giebt, damit der Wille zum Leben sich ewig selbst bejaht, *muss* es auch ewig die „Qual der Gebälerin“ geben [...] Dies Alles bedeutet das Wort Dionysos: ich kenne keine höhere Symbolik als diese *griechische* Symbolik, die der Dionysien.¹⁰⁷

Nietzsche connects the concept of Becoming to the concept of the suffering and to the myth of Dionysos that is so important for him. There is no will to life without the suffering of birth-giving. Growth and Becoming condition pain and suffering. This wording and passage, although late in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, is reminiscent of the early Romantic Nietzsche's treatment of Becoming as the ecstasies and sufferings of the *Ur-einen* and of Dionysos. We will thus have to consider in light of statements such as these and others, whether Nietzsche's concept of Becoming has really evolved and radically changed since his early writings.

e) Becoming in Book V of *The Gay Science*

The relationship between his and Hegel's respective positions is qualified by Nietzsche, showing that Nietzsche is not entirely opposed to Hegel's historicism and interpretation of Becoming as the mediating factor in the concept of history:

Wir Deutsche sind Hegelianer, auch wenn es nie einen Hegel gegeben hätte, insofern wir (im Gegensatz zu allen Lateinern) dem Werden, der Entwicklung instinktiv einen tieferen Sinn und reicheren Werth zumessen als dem, was „ist“; wir glauben kaum an die Berechtigung des Begriffs „Sein“ —; ebenfalls insofern wir

¹⁰⁷ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *GD*, Was ich den Alten verdanke, 4, (KSA 6, pp.159-160).

unsrer menschlichen Logik nicht geneigt sind einzuräumen, dass sie die Logik an sich, die einzige Art Logik sei (wir möchten vielmehr uns überreden, dass sie nur ein Spezialfall sei, und vielleicht einer der wunderlichsten und dümsten —).¹⁰⁸

In this text, Nietzsche acknowledges his proximity to Hegel and to the tradition of German Idealism. It is a fact that the concept of *Werden* as an essential component of their respective philosophies is common to Schelling, Hegel and Nietzsche. But Nietzsche's concept of Becoming is different from Hegel's insofar as it is not dialectical and teleological. It is one of the theses of this dissertation, that Nietzsche develops his own original concept of Becoming partly in opposition to Hegel and partly in opposition to Aristotle in order to de-ontologize Becoming by removing dialecticity and teleology from it.

Nietzsche writes:

Von vornherein möchte sich eine andre Unterscheidung mehr zu empfehlen scheinen sie ist bei weitem augenscheinlicher — nämlich das Augenmerk darauf, ob das Verlangen nach Starmachen, Verewigen, nach Sein die Ursache des Schaffens ist, oder aber das Verlangen nach Zerstörung, nach Wechsel, nach Neuem, nach Zukunft, nach Werden. Aber beide Arten des Verlangens erweisen sich, tiefer angesehen, noch als zweideutig, und zwar deutbar eben nach jenem vorangestellten und mit Recht, wie mich dünkt, vorgezogenen Schema.¹⁰⁹

The ambiguity that Nietzsche refers to is important since he claims that the need for destruction, change and Becoming can be the expression of an over-full force that is full of possibilities for the future. But this need for destruction that elevates itself against what perdures and Being can also be the expression or manifestation of what Nietzsche calls the *Schlechtweggekommenen* ("those who have lost out") and which he associates with the political movements of socialism and anarchism.

¹⁰⁸ *FW*, 357 (*KSA* 3, 599).

¹⁰⁹ *FW*, 370 (*KSA* 3, 621-622).

In the same way as the will to change and Becoming is ambiguous, so is the will to eternity or to eternalization. The will to eternalization can develop out of the gratitude and love. Nietzsche is thinking here of Goethe and Hafiz. However, this will to eternalization can also express itself according to Nietzsche, out of the tyrannical will of a tortured being that wants to stamp its suffering into a binding law and obligation.

The previous passage gives different criteria for establishing if a form of life is positive i.e. life-affirming. Previously in the Western metaphysical tradition a concept would be judged worthy and good if it affirmed the value of Being and not that of Becoming. Nietzsche attempts to reverse this assessment to a certain extent insofar as he claims that Becoming is more fundamental than Being.

But the distinction between Being and Becoming must give way to a more fundamental distinction: that of the active and reactive. These concepts of the active and reactive are not present explicitly in the above passage. In fact, Nietzsche speaks of active and reactive when it comes to the concept of classical and romantic art: “Ob nicht der Gegensatz der Aktiven und Reaktiven hinter jenem Gegensatz von Classisch und Romantisch verborgen liegt ?...”¹¹⁰ Nietzsche also uses the distinction between active and reactive with respect to nihilism. An active nihilism affirms life while a reactive (or passive) nihilism is the one espoused by the proponents of the slave morality. These proponents of the slave morality are, politically, the socialists and the anarchists as the quote from the *Gay Science* demonstrates.

f) Becoming in the *Nachlass* of the Late Period (1883-1889)

In the later writings, the concept of Becoming is connected to the liberation of the world of the *hic et nunc* from the order of Being. Nietzsche operates a de-

transcendentalization of the world of appearances and liberates it from a world of Being. For Nietzsche, there is no final purpose and no final state in Becoming: “Wenn die Weltbewegung einen Zielzustand hätte, so müßte er erreicht sein”. This is the case because Nietzsche believes that the present moment is preceded by an infinity of time and that if there were a *Zielzustand* for the world-movement (Weltbewegung) such a final-state would have been reached already. The argument is couched in two premisses, time is an infinite magnitude and space and matter are finite magnitudes. Given the finitude of space and matter, there are only a finite number of configurations of space-matter that can exist. But since time is infinite, this means that a final-state would already have been reached eventually. However, here Nietzsche inserts a third argument : we empirically observe that there is no final-state or equilibrium and that things are in movement, change and Becoming. This observation happens through our senses and through the fact that we see that the world of Becoming is one of change. However, here some might want to invoke against Nietzsche that there is also stability that can be observed in the world of Becoming through our senses. So why claim that our senses can be trusted when they show change, movement and impermanence and that they cannot be trusted when they witness rest, stability and permanence ?

Müller-Lauter has observed that Nietzsche’s observations on the end-state and final-state of Becoming could be understood in the context of the discussions that were occurring in the field of thermodynamics. According to Müller-Lauter, Nietzsche was familiar with the laws of thermodynamics.¹¹⁰ The end-state could then be conceptualized as a state of ‘calorific’ death of the universe. Nietzsche is opposed to this physical conception and he argues by using the concepts of the finitude of space, force and matter

¹¹⁰ KSA 12, 9 [112].

¹¹¹ See Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His*

and the infinitude of time.

Let us continue with Nietzsche's argument : since we do not observe a final-state and since an infinity of time has already passed, Nietzsche concludes that there does not *exist* a final-state or a purpose in Becoming. Becoming has to be explained without having recourse to final purposes and Becoming has to appear justified in every moment. Nietzsche writes : "das Werden hat *keinen Zielzustand*, mündet nicht in ein 'Sein'".¹¹² It is clear thus that for Nietzsche, there is a *cesura* between Being and Becoming. Nietzsche does not identify Being and Becoming dialectically as Hegel does. In the late *Nachlass*, the connection between Becoming, Being and *Schein* is transformed with respect to the early Romantic phase where both Being and Becoming seemed to be secreted by the *Ureinen*. This is testified to by the following passage : "das Werden ist *kein Scheinzustand*; vielleicht ist die *seiende* Welt ein Schein."¹¹³ In the same passage Nietzsche affirms : "das Werden ist werthgleich in jedem Augenblick: die Summe seines Werthes bleibt sich gleich: *anders ausgedrückt: es hat gar keinen Werth*, denn es fehlt etwas, woran es zu messen wäre, und in Bezug worauf das Wort 'Werth' Sinn *hätte*."¹¹⁴ This passage helps us understand Nietzsche's cosmological proof of eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger has operated an essentialization and an ontologization of this proof by claiming the finitude of matter and space amounts to a finitude of Being and Becoming. This ontologization is perhaps fruitful but we have to be textually more precise when interpreting Nietzsche. The previous text has to be compared with and understood in relation to the following quote which chronologically belongs in section 1.2 but which I analyze here given its thematic similarity to the quote that refers to the

Philosophy, Berlin, New York, University of Illinois Press, 1999, p.111.

¹¹² *KSA* 13, 11 [72].

¹¹³ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 13, 11 [72].

¹¹⁴ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 13, 11 [72].

Zielzustand. Nietzsche writes:

Wäre ein Gleichgewicht der Kraft irgendwann einmal erreicht worden, so dauerte es noch: also ist es nie eingetreten. Der augenblickliche Zustand widerspricht der Annahme. Nimmt man an, es habe einmal einen Zustand gegeben, absolut gleich dem augenblicklichen, so wird diese Annahme nicht durch den augenblicklichen Zustand widerlegt.¹¹⁵

But why should the momentary state (*augenblicklichen Zustand*) cancel or refute (*widerlegt*) a state that is absolutely identical (*gleich*) to the momentary? Is this because what is momentary (*augenblicklich*) exists and must be unique and non-identical? Does every moment seem unique in its time-space configuration so that this refutes the existence of an identical “other” momentary state? Nietzsche claims that there are infinite possibilities (*unendlichen Möglichkeiten*) and the identical momentary state must have existed since, according to Nietzsche, an infinity has already elapsed starting backwards.

Unter den unendlichen Möglichkeiten muß es aber diesen Fall gegeben haben, denn bis jetzt ist schon eine Unendlichkeit verflossen. Wenn das Gleichgewicht möglich wäre, so müßte es eingetreten sein. — Und wenn dieser augenblickliche Zustand da war, dann auch der, der ihn gebar und dessen Vorzustand zurück daraus ergibt sich, daß er auch ein zweites drittes Mal da sein wird — unzählige Male, vorwärts und rückwärts. D.h. es bewegt sich alles Werden in der Wiederholung einer bestimmten Zahl vollkommener gleicher Zustände.¹¹⁶

We can see from the previous passage something I will allude to later in this thesis: Nietzsche is influenced by Dühring’s finitism and his theory of determinate number (*bestimmter Zahl*). This is apparent from Nietzsche’s claim that “es bewegt sich alles Werden in der Wiederholung einer bestimmten Zahl vollkommener gleichen Zustände”.

¹¹⁵ KSA 9, 11 [245].

¹¹⁶ KSA 9, 11 [245].

The following passage is also related to the two previous ones. Although chronologically it belongs to the period 1880-1882, and thus should be placed in section 2.2, I place it here given its thematic similarity and relevance to the other two quotes: “Man gehe einmal rückwärts. Hätte die Welt ein Ziel, so müßte es erreicht sein: gäbe es für sie einen (unbeabsichtigten) Endzustand, so müßte er ebenfalls erreicht sein.”¹¹⁷ This passage is crucial for my claim that Nietzsche removes teleology from within Becoming. Here, the passage refers to the world (Welt) but world and Becoming and world-process are often used inter-changeably in Nietzsche’s usage.

The next part of the passage speaks of a few key-terms that recur in Nietzsche’s attempt to think through the concept of Becoming:

Wäre sie [die Welt, P.C.] ewig neu werdend, so wäre sie damit gesetzt als etwas an sich Wunderbares und Frei- und Selbstschöpferisch-Göttliches. Das ewige Neu werden setzt voraus: daß die Kraft sich selber willkürlich vermehre, daß sie nicht nur die Absicht, sondern auch die Mittel habe, sich selber vor der Wiederholung zu hüten, in eine alte Form zurückzugerathen, somit in jedem Augenblick jede Bewegung auf diese Vermeidung zu controliren oder die Unfähigkeit, in die gleiche Lage zu gerathen: das hieße, daß die Kraftmenge nichts Festes sei und ebenso die Eigenschaften der Kraft. Etwas Un-Festes von Kraft, etwas Undulatorisches ist uns ganz undenkbar.¹¹⁸

The possibility of novelty within Becoming which Nietzsche seems to reject (in this passage at least he does this clearly). Here Nietzsche is consistent: if there were eternal novelty then that would preclude the recurrence of the same. This idea that eternal novelty is connected with the existence of God is repeated in *KSA* 11, 36 [15]:

Die Welt, wenn auch kein Gott mehr, soll doch der göttlichen Schöpferkraft, der unendlichen Verwandlungs-Kraft fähig sein; sie soll es sich willkürlich verwehren, in eine ihrer alten Formen zurückzugerathen, sie soll nicht nur die Absicht, sondern auch die Mittel haben, sich selber vor jeder Wiederholung zu bewahren;

¹¹⁷ *KSA* 9, 11 [292].

¹¹⁸ *KSA* 9, 11 [292].

Nietzsche claims that recurrence counteracts this thought of the existence of God

Another important aspect in this passage is Nietzsche's claim that force (Kraft) must be something stable. He claims that an un-stable (Un-Festes) force is unthinkable. This may seem strange given Nietzsche's aversion to stability and permanence, but it seems that Nietzsche does need to fix some of his concepts in order to prove the eternal recurrence of the same and to clarify his concept of Becoming. Nietzsche writes in connection to the concept of force:

die Welt, als Kraft, darf nicht unbegrenzt gedacht werden, denn sie kann nicht so gedacht werden wir verbieten uns den Begriff einer unendlichen Kraft als mit dem Begriff „Kraft“ unverträglich. Also fehlt der Welt auch das Vermögen zur ewigen Neuheit.¹¹⁹

The concept of force cannot be thought of as un-limited. Therefore the force must be both finite and fixed. Again, in the previous passage, Nietzsche claims the world does not have the capacity for eternal novelty.

This idea that the world cannot experience eternally new states is important. If there is no state of equilibrium that can ever be reached, it seems that we are forced to conclude that there will be eternal novelty in the world. But Nietzsche surprisingly claims that no eternal novelty of the states of the world is possible. This is surprising. It is possible here to suspect the consistency or coherence of Nietzsche's thought. In a way he is forced to admit that no eternal novelty of the world is possible since, if there were eternal novelty, that would preclude the possibility of an eternal recurrence of the same. But the thought of eternal recurrence is paradoxical and self-contradictory. It exists at the limits of coherence. As a fantasmatic thought-experiment or an existential fable there is no coherence-problem. But if we expect to describe eternal recurrence as a scientific

¹¹⁹ KSA II, 36 [15].

doctrine (something Nietzsche was committed to as well), consistency and coherence are principles to which we must hold Nietzsche accountable.

The previous passage is closely related to *KSA* 9, 11 [245], where Nietzsche claims that a *Gleichgewicht* of force is never attained. Nietzsche's premises is that if a state of equilibrium (of forces and of the world-process) were to be attained, then we could empirically (through our senses perhaps, Nietzsche does want to restore to them the credibility that most of the philosophical tradition has refused them but the important citation *Will to Power* 617 (*KSA* 12, 7 [54]) claims that there is a *zwiefache Fälschung* one that is generated by the senses and one that is generated by the intellect) establish the existence of such an equilibrium. But since our senses show us that the world is in movement and not in stasis, we have to reject this hypothesis of equilibrium.

Nietzsche writes: "Hätte die Welt ein Ziel, so müßte es erreicht sein. Gäbe es für sie einen unbeabsichtigten Endzustand, so müßte er ebenfalls erreicht sein."¹²⁰ The argument for this claim is the one I have repeatedly invoked: through our senses we observe that no state of equilibrium has been attained and since an infinity of time or an eternity of time has elapsed, we are forced to conclude that a *state of equilibrium does not exist*. Further in the same passage, Nietzsche writes: "Wäre sie [die Welt, P.C.] überhaupt eines Verharrens und Starrwerdens, eines 'Seins' fähig, hätte sie nur Einen Augenblick in allem ihrem Werden diese Fähigkeit des 'Seins', so wäre es wiederum mit allem Werden längst zu Ende, also auch mit allem Denken, mit allem 'Geiste'."¹²¹ This passage is a strong affirmation of the fact that Becoming is not stamped with Being, but that the only thing that perdures is an eternal and absolute Becoming. There is no possibility, according to Nietzsche of even a single instant (*einen Augenblick*) of Being

¹²⁰ *KSA* 11, 36 [15].

¹²¹ *KSA* 11, 36 [15].

within Becoming. If this were the case, if Becoming stopped for an instant and froze itself in Being, this would entail the destruction of Becoming, of thinking and of the spirit, according to Nietzsche.

Nietzsche claims that there is a tendency to interpret the absence of goal and telos as another telos of the world. This is wrong according to him. For him this amounts to the old religious-Christian mistake and is a religious way of looking at Becoming:

... sie [die Welt, P.C.] soll somit in jedem Augenblick jede ihrer Bewegungen auf die Vermeidung von Zielen, Endzuständen, Wiederholungen hin controliren und was Alles die Folgen einer solchen unverzeihlich-verrückten Denk- und Wunschweise sein mögen. Das ist immer noch die alte religiöse Denk- und Wunschweise, eine Art Sehnsucht zu glauben, daß irgendworin doch die Welt dem alten geliebten, unendlichen, unbegrenzt-schöpferischen Gotte gleich sei daß irgendworin doch der alte Gott noch lebe...¹²²

The argument that Nietzsche presents in both these quotes is very important. I have already alluded to this argument in section 2.2. Nietzsche claims that no state of equilibrium of the world (*Zielzustand* or *Endzustand*) can be reached since an infinity of time has passed and no such state has been reached. Thus, since we can think backwards and examine the state of the world, we can go back from state to state until we would reach an *Endzustand* or a *Zielzustand*. But this is precisely what, according to Nietzsche, we cannot do. The grounds for his argument have to do with the configurations of force, matter and time and I will examine the structure of this argument a bit further down, but it is important to see the radicality of Nietzsche's claim and the target that he is aiming at. This target in my opinion is Aristotle.

Aristotle argued that we could always find causes in nature that would explain phenomena. By regressing along the chain of efficient causes, we would eventually reach

¹²² KSA II, 36 [15].

a state that was unconditioned. This unconditioned state is what Aristotle calls the prime mover in the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle's claim is that logic prevents us from thinking an infinite regress of causal explanations: thus there must be a state that does not have a cause that causes it: this state of the prime mover is in might be what Nietzsche calls the *Endzustand* or the *Zielzustand*. Of course the unmoved mover in Aristotle is not identical to Nietzsche's *Endzustand*, but Nietzsche's way of arguing when he discusses the *Endzustand* is clearly physico-cosmological.

Another aspect of the infinite regression backwards must be taken into account. It must be remembered that Kant, in the first antinomy showed that, on the one hand, the universe had no temporal beginning and that, on the other hand, (the anti-thesis) the universe had an absolute beginning in time. Thus Nietzsche, by claiming that there is an infinite duration in time (that the universe has no absolute beginning in time), adopts only one side of the antinomy (the thesis or the anti-thesis) and can be thought to regress behind the Kantian position into a form of dogmatic metaphysics.

Nietzsche writes in connection to this:

[...] Man hat neuerdings mehrfach in dem Begriff Zeit-Unendlichkeit der Welt nach hinten einen Widerspruch finden gewollt: man hat ihn selbst gefunden, um den Preis freilich, dabei den Kopf mit dem Schwanz zu verwechseln. Nichts kann mich hindern, von diesem Augenblick an rückwärts rechnend zu sagen „ich werde nie dabei an ein Ende kommen“: wie ich vom gleichen Augenblick vorwärts rechnen kann, ins Unendliche hinaus. Erst wenn ich den Fehler machen wollte ich werde mich hüten, es zu thun diesen korrekten Begriff eines regressus in infinitum gleichzusetzen mit einem gar nicht vollziehbaren Begriff eines unendlichen progressus bis jetzt, wenn ich die Richtung (vorwärts oder rückwärts) als logisch indifferent setzte, würde ich den Kopf, diesen Augenblick, als Schwanz zu fassen bekommen: das bleibe Ihnen überlassen, mein Herr Dühring! ...¹²³

¹²³ KSA 13, 14 [188].

The reference to Eugen Dühring is important. Nietzsche was certainly interested and to a certain extent under the influence of Dühring's works as the many references to him in the *Nachlass* testify.¹²⁴ Dühring's position on the infinity of time backwards is clearly criticized by Nietzsche but the idea that the the number of world-bodies at any given moment is a particular determinate number is preserved by Nietzsche and used in his argument for the eternal recurrence of the same (the number of states of the quantity of matter in the world is finite and determinate and space is also a finite magnitude, time is infinite, therefore the states of the world must repeat and recur an infinite number of times). But this thesis that matter and space are only understandable in terms of a finite, definite number which Nietzsche seems to be operating with as well, due to Dühring's influence, has been contradicted by ulterior developments in the physical cosmology that have been developed thanks to Einstein's theory of relativity.¹²⁵

This is relevant to the thesis of Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy insofar as Nietzsche believes in some way that Becoming is eternal, infinite and absolute in the early part of his work (in the 1870's). But what becomes, what changes, are the space-

¹²⁴ *KSA* 8, 8 [1], 8 [3], 8 [4], 9 [1], 29 [8], *KSA* 9, 2 [77], *JGB*, 204 (*KSA* 5, p.131), *GM*, *Zweite Abhandlung*, 11 (*KSA* 5, p.310), *Dritte Abhandlung*, 14 (*KSA*, p.370), 26 (*KSA*, p.406) *KSA* 10, 7 [21], 7 [78], 7 [84], 9 [48], 9 [50], 10 [9], 11 [9], 18 [55], 24 [24], *KSA* 11, 25 [211], 25 [265], 26 [48], 26 [51], 26 [233], 26 [382], 26 [383], 27 [23], 27 [75], 34 [99], 34 [207], 34 [215], 36 [3], 37 [11], *KSA* 12, 1 [226], 14 [188], 19 [10].

¹²⁵ It is perhaps anachronistic to compare Nietzsche's considerations on the nature of space-time with those of Einstein. This is the case because Nietzsche had no way of knowing about the relativistic revolution in modern physics that would occur in the twentieth-century. But Nietzsche does attempt to prove recurrence scientifically. Thus we must scrutinize his views with the help of the most developed, advanced theories of modern physics which include the relativistic revolution in physical cosmology. Nietzsche claims that there configurations of matter-space are finite. Time is infinite. Thus in an infinite time, all the possible matter-space states would be effectively run through and an eternal recurrence of the same would follow. But this claim is contradicted, at least intuitively, by the hypothesis of modern physical cosmology that we are only living in one of possible infinite number of universes. Modern relativistic cosmology considers the universe in virtue of space-time-matter configurations. There is no consensus as of yet among physicists as to whether the space-time-matter configurations are infinite (geometrically *open*), finite (geometrically *closed*) or simply something in between which they call "flat". Of course the fact that the universe (that is the sum of the space-time-matter configurations) might be neither infinite nor finite creates great logical difficulties.

time-matter configurations. This is true but it only dawns on Nietzsche as he attempts to prove the logical and scientific necessity of the eternal recurrence of the same. The fact that Nietzsche attempts to think at the same time the *in-finitude* and *finitude* of Becoming is something that points to a possible inconsistency or contradiction of his philosophy (Müller-Lauter). The question is to know whether Nietzsche was aware of this contradiction.

The argument for the repetition of states in Becoming is used by Nietzsche to attempt to prove eternal recurrence. Since Aristotle, eternity has been associated with the circle. It is clear that each passing temporal moment could not recur or return unless it described a circle. But no matter how large the circle is, its periodicity means that any point on its circumference will recur even if an infinite amount of time has passed.

Nietzsche does not see any problems with a *Zeit-Unendlichkeit* reckoned backwards from the instant (*Augenblick*), something which according to my understanding of Aristotle would seem logically inconsistent. Nietzsche distinguishes between an infinite regress and an infinite progress. According to him, only the infinite regress is possible whereas the infinite progress is a “gar nicht vollziehbaren Begriff”. Thus when we think of an infinite time that flows backwards there is no contradiction, the contradiction occurs when we reverse the perspective and start from an initial state and attempt to come from it to the present. In this case, that is unthinkable according to Nietzsche, and we could never leave the final state or initial state to reach our present state.

The following passage is important because it deals with Becoming and the role it plays in the proof of Nietzsche’s concept of the eternal recurrence: “Die Welt besteht; sie ist nichts, was wird, nichts, was vergeht. Oder vielmehr: sie wird, sie vergeht, aber sie

hat nie angefangen zu werden und nie aufgehört zu vergehen sie erhält sich in Beidem...”¹²⁶ This passage is similar to the one in *Götzendämmerung* in which Nietzsche claims that “Was ist wird nicht; was wird ist nicht...”.¹²⁷ The point that Nietzsche is focusing on in this passage is that the world has never begun to become and has never stopped to pass away: it maintains itself between the two states. This is the problem that I have already discussed of an initial-state for world-Becoming. Müller-Lauter has dealt with this problem in his Nietzsche interpretation.¹²⁸

In the same passage Nietzsche writes: “Der letzte Versuch, eine Welt die anfängt, zu concipiren, ist neuerdings mehrfach mit Hülfe einer logischen Prozedur gemacht worden zumeist, wie zu errathen ist, aus einer theologischen Hinterabsicht...”¹²⁹ The problem of an initial-state of Becoming has theological pre-suppositions according to Nietzsche. As I have written elsewhere, I am not sure that Nietzsche is aware that he may be regressing behind Kant’s point of view (and into dogmatic metaphysics) who in his first antinomy showed that the question of the beginning of the world: whether it came into existence at a finite time in the past or whether the world had no beginning in time was a question that was beyond the scope of pure reason’s competence.

I believe that Nietzsche is in fact open to the attack that claims that there is an infinite regress in his position with respect to Becoming. Curiously he even acknowledges the possibility of the infinite regress but sees nothing wrong with it. He distinguishes the infinite regress from an infinite progress and claims that only the progress is logically inconsistent or incoherent.

¹²⁶ KSA 13, 14 [188].

¹²⁷ *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Die “Vernunft” in der Philosophie, I, (KSA 5, p.74).

¹²⁸ See Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, Berlin, New York, University of Illinois Press, 1999, pp.84-121.

¹²⁹ KSA 13, 14 [188].

One attempt to save Nietzsche from the regress is to claim that we can conceive of an infinite regress but not rationally as Kant is correct to claim. This possibility of an infinite regress would have to do then with the possibility of the will of willing backwards which is not explicable rationally but veers into an existential or mythical fable. Reason is conceived dualistically and dialectically in Kant, as a spontaneity that wills outside of the naturalistic series of causally interrelated events, and as a passivity that is inserted into the naturalistic series. But it is precisely this dualism which Nietzsche rejects according to my reading.

Where Kant finds a spontaneity that comes into existence to escape the regress, Nietzsche brings forth the notion of an irrational will that is united in its desire to transform the past into the future. It may thus be argued that an infinite regress that helps bring the thought of the past existence of the world into the present and into the future is facilitated by the fable of eternal recurrence of the same.

Nietzsche speaks of the fact that he had found the thought of eternal recurrence by other, earlier thinkers, but that it was always connected to theological presuppositions. Thus, Nietzsche's breakthrough with respect to eternal recurrence would be that he had detached it from its theological pre-suppositions: "Ich bin auf diesen Gedanken bei früheren Denkern gestoßen: jedes Mal war er durch andere Hintergedanken bestimmt (meistens theologische, zu Gunsten des *creator spiritus*)"¹³⁰

Nietzsche writes about the fact that the world cannot stop to become. The world does not reach a state of equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*). This statement by Nietzsche is repeated by Nietzsche in many other places in his corpus and thus we are forced to take it seriously. The stamping of Being onto Becoming does not result in an equilibrium but in a *Fälschung*. Becoming does not flow or lead (*münden*) into Being or into non-Being as

the metaphysical tradition (Hegel being the last great representative of this tradition)

claims. Becoming and Being must remain detached and separate:

Wenn die Welt überhaupt erstarren, vertrocknen, absterben, Nichts werden könnte, oder wenn sie einen Gleichgewichtszustand erreichen könnte, oder wenn sie überhaupt irgend ein Ziel hätte, das die Dauer, die Unveränderlichkeit, das Ein-für-alle-Mal in sich schliesse (kurz, metaphysisch geredet: wenn das Werden in das Sein oder ins Nichts münden könnte) so müßte dieser Zustand erreicht sein. Aber er ist nicht erreicht [...] ¹³¹

Although, fascinated by mechanism throughout his philosophical career, it is quite plausible to think with Stack and Müller-Lauter¹³² that in the end, Nietzsche rejects this world-view in favor of a dynamism and energetic relativism under the influence of Roger Boscovich. This is what is apparent from the next passage:

Das ist unsere einzige Gewißheit, die wir in den Händen halten, um als Korrektiv gegen eine große Menge an sich möglicher Welt-Hypothesen zu dienen. Kann z.B. der Mechanismus der Consequenz eines Finalzustandes nicht entgehen, welche Thompson ihm gezogen hat, so ist damit der Mechanismus widerlegt. ¹³³

Further Nietzsche writes in connection to mechanism and this seems to confirm his critique of that world-view:

Diese Conception ist nicht ohne weiteres eine mechanistische: denn wäre sie das, so würde sie nicht eine unendliche Wiederkehr identischer Fälle bedingen, sondern einen Finalzustand. Weil die Welt ihn nicht erreicht hat, muß der Mechanismus uns als unvollkommene und nur vorläufige Hypothese gelten [...] ¹³⁴

¹³⁰ KSA 13, 14 [188].

¹³¹ KSA 13, 14 [188].

¹³² Müller-Lauter quotes a letter by Gast that sketches Boscovich's influence on Nietzsche. See *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, Berlin, New York, University of Illinois Press, 1999, Chapter 7, note 88. Stack (*Lange and Nietzsche*, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1983) devotes a whole chapter of his book (Chapter IX, *A Force-Point World*) to analyze the influence of Boscovich upon Nietzsche both via Lange and directly. There is evidence that Nietzsche took out and studied Boscovich's book *Philosophia Naturalis* from the Basel University library sometime in 1873, see *Lange und Nietzsche*, p.227.

¹³³ KSA 13, 14 [188].

¹³⁴ KSA 13, 14 [188].

The notions of *Kreislauf* that I have already mentioned is important insofar as it connects the notions of Becoming and eternal recurrence of the same. What repeats itself infinitely is world as *Kreislauf*. Another aspect of the citation is its emphasis on a finite number of “combinations” of the matter-space configurations. This emphasis on combinations shows that Nietzsche might have an elementary acquaintance with mathematical statistics and that he thought that this knowledge could be used to prove the eternal recurrence of the same:

Wenn die Welt als bestimmte Größe von Kraft und als bestimmte Zahl von Kraftcentren gedacht werden darf und jede andere Vorstellung bleibt unbestimmt und folglich unbrauchbar so folgt daraus, daß sie eine berechenbare Zahl von Combinationen, im großen Würfelspiel ihres Daseins, durchzumachen hat. In einer unendlichen Zeit würde jede mögliche Combination irgendwann einmal erreicht sein; mehr noch, sie würde unendliche Male erreicht sein. Und da zwischen jeder “Combination“ und ihrer nächsten „Wiederkehr“ alle überhaupt noch möglichen Combinationen abgelaufen sein müßten und jede dieser Combinationen die ganze Folge der Combinationen in derselben Reihe bedingt, so wäre damit ein Kreislauf von absolute identischen Reihen bewiesen: die Welt als Kreislauf der sich unendlich oft bereits wiederholt hat und der sein Spiel in infinitum spielt.¹³⁵

Nietzsche’s cosmological position is influenced here by the conception of determinate number that is developed by Dühring’s position on the idea that the the number of world-bodies at any given moment is a particular *determinate number* (*bestimmte Zahl*). This idea is preserved by Nietzsche and used in his argument for the eternal recurrence of the same (the number of states of the quantity of matter in the world is finite and determinate, time is infinite, therefore the states of the world must repeat and recur an infinite number of times.) But this thesis that all infinity must be countable, which Nietzsche seems to be operating with as well, due to Dühring’s influence, has been contradicted by ulterior developments in the foundations of mathematics and particularly by Georg Cantor’s work

on the order of infinities and on the concept of transfinite number. Cantor distinguishes between a countable infinity associated with the natural numbers and an un-countable infinity associated with the integers and the real numbers. This does not show that Dühring is necessarily wrong, since he could argue that the infinity of the real numbers exists only theoretically and in our heads, as a product of our representations, and not as such in the natural, physical world.¹³⁶

But Cantor's theory of sets is generally accepted by most modern mathematicians as grounding the differential and integral calculus in terms of the clarification of the notions of continuity and discreteness and *this* calculus can be experimentally validated, verified and falsified in the natural, physical world. Thus it might seem that if Nietzsche's theory or attempt at proving the eternal recurrence of the same is dependent on Dühring's theory of definite number, even if critically modified by Nietzsche in terms of a form of reversal of Dühring's argument (Nietzsche believes in an infinity of time backwards whereas Dühring only believes in an infinity of time forwards), then we might have reason to criticize Nietzsche as well if we reject the relationship which he sees at work between the finite and the infinite. Cantor's theory is not a purely mathematical theory, it has philosophical implications since it deals with the philosophical grounds of mathematical logic and with the mathematico-logical grounds of philosophy. These critiques of Nietzsche's positions have to take into account his hostility towards the purely mathematical which he conflates with the logical and which he criticizes under the

¹³⁵ *KSA* 13, 14 [188].

¹³⁶ Cantor writes about Dühring: "The proofs of Dühring against the properly-infinite could be given in much fewer words and appear to me to amount to this, either that a definite finite number, however large it may be thought to be, can never be an infinite number, as follows immediately from the concept of it, or else that the variable, an unlimitedly large finite number, cannot be thought with the quality of definiteness and therefore not with the quality of existence, as follows again from the nature of variability. That not the least is hereby established against the conceivability of transfinite number, I feel certain; and yet, those proofs are taken as proofs against the reality of transfinite number. To me this mode of argumentation appears the same as if, from the existence of innumerable shades of green, we were to conclude that there

principle of logical unity and identity. It is not useful to delve into the implications this might have for logic or philosophy of mathematics further at this point.

Nietzsche's cosmological proofs of eternal recurrence thus need to be re-examined in terms of the philosophical implications of Cantor's ground-breaking work in the foundations of mathematics. I do not think that Nietzsche was familiar with Cantor's work and it has been acknowledged that Nietzsche's genius was un-mathematical. But this does not mean that implication of Cantor's work should not make us re-consider Nietzsche's cosmological proofs of eternal recurrence.

What Nietzsche most reproaches Dühring with the most is his belief in an initial state of the universe. For Nietzsche, this initial-state of the universe or of world-Becoming does not seem to exist. The theory of the initial state follows, according to Dühring, from his concept of *determinate number*. It must be said that Dühring is here intuitively closer to the theory of the "Big Bang" around which there seems to be consensus in the astro-physical community of our day. However, both Nietzsche's and Dühring's respective positions seem to posit only one side of Kant's first antinomy and thus seem to regress behind Kant's position and into dogmatic metaphysics.

This is misleading especially with respect to Nietzsche. As I have argued earlier, the dualism and dialectical aspect of reason is rejected by Nietzsche in favor of a unity of the will that can will backward into an infinite regress. It is here that eternal recurrence becomes mythical and existential and resists a purely logical and rational analysis.

It would be helpful to examine the concept of process in view of the previous discussion. A process derives its meaning from the fact that it has a beginning or initial state, a direction and an end or final state. Without the final state, there is no closure to

the process and this lack of closure prevents the process from possessing any meaning. The final or end state is projected (*hinprojiziert*) according to Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism onto a beyond. This final state becomes the true world of Being that is devoid of any Becoming. This beyond has been differently interpreted, whether in the Platonic or the Christian tradition. It could mean the realm of the Ideas, heaven or the Godhead of the divinity itself. Thus, according to Nietzsche we derive from the world of appearances a concept of purpose which is then stabilized, cleansed of the notion of change inherent in it and then we project it onto the beyond, thus splitting the world of phenomena into two: a true world of Being and a world of appearances and Becoming. Nietzsche is conscious of the appearance of circularity in this form of argument: first the world of appearances exists and then through the derivation of something (the end-state) from the world of appearances, the dichotomy between the world of Being and the world of appearances is first brought to consciousness. However, Nietzsche is aware that the world of appearances disappears as well in the History of an Error. So he is aware that the world of appearances cannot function as an absolute basic or posit from which the world of Being might be derived.

But the problem is that the world of appearances and of Becoming disappears as well. Thus, Nietzsche eliminates teleology from Becoming and this is what constitutes his progress with respect to Aristotle and Hegel. Here the notion of progress must not be understood as re-introduction of teleology in the line of evolution from Aristotle and Hegel to Nietzsche. Progress means just that: change and evolution but a directedness and sense (meaning) – schema from Aristotle and Hegel to Nietzsche that could again re-interpret a progressive movement of clarification of the concept of Becoming from these philosophers to Nietzsche is ruled out.

That God is eliminated from the equation, at least *prima facie* (I have already alluded to Nietzsche's ambiguous relation to atheism), means that no one is responsible for Becoming. It means that Becoming does not aim at anything higher than itself. Becoming aims at nothing and nothing is reached through Becoming, not even power. There is a tension here between the doctrines of the will to power and that of nihilism. It is true that wills are aimed, individually at power, but the doctrine of nihilism teaches that Becoming as whole does not aim at anything and this includest the *telos* of power. Power exists but the nihilative aspects of Becoming, its radical transformation and flux destroy the "reality" of power.

The configurations of power and the power-wills that exist in the world of Becoming or in life give rise to aggregations and disaggregations of power. There is no global aim that could be constituted by an increase in the sum of power or will to power in world-Becoming or in life.

In this sense, Becoming is related to the concept of nihilism. The problem of nihilism consists in the fact that Becoming has no ultimate transcendent meaning that it aims at. There is no higher purpose, no *telos* that can be attained through Becoming. The aim is lacking. This is the case because the highest values (Being, truth, good, freedom, purpose, unity, identity) have lost their value as grounds.

The problem of the teleology of Becoming is complicated by the fact that this is not simply a metaphysical problem. It is a moral one as well. In fact, it is Nietzsche's great originality and fine psychological instinct to have detected behind the metaphysical scheme a moral problem. The fact that Becoming moves from actuality to potentiality through an entelechical movement is not *really* a purely ontological or metaphysical problem. Rather the entelechical scheme has been borrowed by Aristotle, perhaps unconsciously, from his moral philosophy.

The next passage is important because it establishes a relationship between the feeling of power and perfection and Becoming. Nietzsche establishes a connection between Becoming and the feeling of power which justifies all Becoming. Some like Heidegger have argued that will to power was a way in which Nietzsche attempted to re-think the concept of Becoming. Others,¹³⁷ have interpreted will to power as closer to Nietzsche's concept of life. While I think Heidegger is on to something when he thinks of will to power as a re-articulation of Becoming, I do not believe that these two concepts are simply interchangeable. In either case, this is something that is attested in Heidegger's interpretation. This is the case because a tension is left unresolved in his reading: he wants to interpret will to power both as the Being of beings and at the same time as a re-articulation of Becoming.

The following passage still invokes, as late as 1884, the authority of the pre-Socratics in order to think through the concept of Becoming:

Die großen Probleme vom *Werth des Werdens* gestellt durch Anaximander und Heraclit also die Entscheidung darüber, ob eine moralische oder eine ästhetische Schätzung überhaupt erlaubt ist, in Bezug auf das Ganze. Das große problem, welchen Antheil der *Zwecke-setzende Verstand* an allem Werden hat von Anaxagoras. Das große Problem, ob es ein *Sein* giebt von den Eleaten; und was alles Schein ist. Alle großen Probleme sind vor Socrates gestellt: Socrates: die Einsicht als Mittel zur moralischen Besserung, das Unvernünftige in den Leidenschaften, das *Unzweckmäßige* im Schlecht-sein.¹³⁸

Thus, it can be seen, that as late as Summer-Spring 1884, Nietzsche was still claiming that the pre-Socratics had discovered all the important problems of Western philosophy. And furthermore, Nietzsche also claimed that the purposeful understanding (*Zwecke-setzende Verstand*) in relation to all Becoming had been discovered by Anaxagoras.

¹³⁷ Simmel, Deleuze and Müller-Lauter are the most important names that come to mind.

¹³⁸ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 11, 26 [64].

Finally, Nietzsche emphasizes that Socrates had reinforced this teleological understanding of Becoming when he had decreed that the morally bad (*Schlecht-sein*) was the un-purposeful (*Unzweckmässige*).

In the next passage, just as in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 357, Nietzsche acknowledges a closeness to Hegel in terms of their common high valuation of history. Of course these conceptions of history are radically different. But Nietzsche has in common with Hegel (and according to Nietzsche with German Idealism and the German *Geist* in general) this idea of history as *developmental* (although, if one is precise, one has to acknowledge that for Nietzsche history is more cyclical than developmental and linear):

Was uns ebenso von Kant, wie von Plato und Leibnitz trennt: wir glauben an das Werden allein auch im Geistigen, wir sind *historisch* durch und durch. Dies ist der große Umschwung. Lamarck und Hegel. Darwin ist nur eine Nachwirkung. Die Denkweise *Heraklit's* und *Empedokles'* ist wieder erstanden.¹³⁹

For Nietzsche, as we can tell from the next passage God is considered to be the most annihilating and most life-inimical idea. Attention has been attracted by many scholars (among whom Heidegger might be the most illustrious) however that Nietzsche relationship to “atheism” is highly ambiguous:

Ich habe insgleichen ein umgekehrtes Ideal gesucht eine Denkweise, welche die übermüthigste lebendigste und weltbejahendste aller möglichen Denkweisen ist: ich fand sie im Zuendedenken der mechanistischen Weltbetrachtung [...] Schließlich ergab sich für mich, daß die weltverneinendste aller möglichen Denkensarten die ist, welche das Werden, Entstehen und Vergehen an sich schon schlecht heißt und welche nur das Unbedingte, Eine, Gewisse, Seiende bejaht: ich fand, daß *Gott* der vernichtendste und lebensfeindlichste aller Gedanken ist [...] ¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* II, 34 [73].

¹⁴⁰ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* II, 34 [204].

As I have claimed throughout this section, Becoming is to a certain extent instrumentalized by Nietzsche to prove eternal recurrence. Some things have to be clarified. Nietzsche's relationship to mechanism and thermodynamics and why he thought that Becoming and eternal recurrence could be conceived in relation to these concepts. Mechanism as a cosmology has been overcome by Einsteinian relativity-cosmology, so what does that do to Nietzsche arguments about Becoming and eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche writes: "Die Philosophie, so wie ich sie allein noch gelten lasse, als die allgemeinste Form der Historie, als Versuch das Heraklitische Werden irgendwie zu beschreiben und in Zeichen abzukürzen (in eine Art von scheinbarem Sein gleichsam zu *übersetzen* und zu mumisiren)."¹⁴¹ The passage is important because it shows that, as I pointed out, as late as 1884, Nietzsche was still appealing to the authority of Heraclitus to ground his understanding of history and Becoming. The passage is ambiguous though, because Nietzsche speaks of foreshortening Becoming into signs and mummifying it into a kind of semblance (*scheinbarem*) of Being. Again, the question I am asking throughout this section is one which ascertains whether the concept of Becoming evolves or changes radically with respect to the early and middle phase of Nietzsche's thought.

In my opinion there is no radical change but some scholars¹⁴² believe that there is a permanentization and the introduction of an epoch concept into Becoming starting with the appearance of eternal recurrence in Nietzsche's discourse and conceptuality in the *Gay Science*, Aphorism 341. The majority of the passages which I have been considering, in this section, however show that Nietzsche rejected a state of equilibrium of world-Becoming. This fact also makes sense from the perspective of my own more general

¹⁴¹ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 11, 36 [27].

¹⁴² Heidegger is the most famous example who comes to mind. He has introduced this idea of the

thesis that the totality of Nietzsche's philosophy can be understood as a philosophy of Becoming. In Nietzsche's philosophy, Becoming is finally thought in its greatest radicality in the Western metaphysical tradition: without any reference to finality or dialecticity.

The following passage is one of the most famous in all of Nietzsche's *Nachlass* and it used to be listed as fragment 1067 in the *Will to Power*. I quote from it extensively despite its length:

Und wißt ihr auch, was mir „die Welt“ ist? [...] als ein Werden, das kein Sattwerden, keinen Überdruß, keine Müdigkeit kennt —: diese meine *dionysische* Welt des Ewig-sich-selber-Schaffens, des Ewig-sich-selber-Zerstörens, diese Geheimniß-Welt der doppelten Wollüste, dieß mein jenseits von Gut und Böse, ohne Ziel, wenn nicht im Glück des Kreises ein Ziel liegt, ohne Willen, wenn nicht ein Ring zu sich selber guten Willen hat, wollt ihr einen *Namen* für diese Welt? Eine *Lösung* für alle ihre Räthsel? ein *Licht* auch für euch, ihr Verborgenen, Stärksten, Unerschrockenen, Mitternächtlischen? *Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts außerdem!*“ Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht und nichts außerdem!¹⁴³

This passage, aside from its fame, is also very important insofar as it illustrates Nietzsche's general outlook on cosmology. The world is a world of perpetual change that perpetually returns without ever satisfying and fulfilling itself. The only purpose for such a world, if there is a purpose at all, is the happiness of the circle (*Glück des Kreises*).

The following passage is famous since in it Nietzsche asserts that performs the ultimate act of interpretation is not the human subject but the entity known as will to power. “Man darf nicht fragen: „*wer* interpretirt denn?“ sondern das Interpretiren selbst, als eine Form des Willens zur Macht, hat Dasein (aber nicht als ein „Sein“, sondern als

permanent presence and “permanentization” of Becoming in his Nietzsche lectures.

¹⁴³ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 11, 38 [12].

ein *Prozeß*, ein Werden) als ein Affekt.”¹⁴⁴ This interpretation that is construed as will to power has existence, according to Nietzsche, but this existence is not something that should be understood as a form of Being but rather as a process or as Becoming.

In general, Nietzsche claims his proximity to Hegel’s historicization of philosophy through the concept Becoming.¹⁴⁵ But here, Nietzsche claims that Hegel’s philosophy despite its emphasis on history is still too Platonic:

Der Hegelische Ausweg, im Anschluß an Plato, ein Stück
Romantik und Reaktion, zugleich das Symptom des
historischen Sinns, einer neuen *Kraft*: der „Geist“ selbst ist das sich
enthüllende und verwirklichende Ideal, im „Prozeß“, im „Werden“
offenbart sich ein immer Mehr von diesem Ideal, an das wir
glauben —, also das Ideal verwirklicht sich, der Glaube richtet sich
auf die *Zukunft*, in der er seinem edlen Bedürfnisse nach anbeten
kann. Kurz,
1) Gott ist uns unerkennbar und unnachweisbar —
Hintersinn der erkenntnistheoretischen Bewegung
2) Gott ist nachweisbar, aber als etwas Werdendes —, und
wir gehören dazu, eben mit unsrem Drang zum Idealen —
Hintersinn der historisirenden Bewegung
bei derselbe historische Sinn, in die Natur übertretend,
hat [...] ¹⁴⁶

In the previous passage we encounter again the relationship between Nietzsche and Hegel, his great predecessor. However, Nietzsche finds unacceptable Hegel’s theory that the absolute idea “realizes” itself progressively in history through the rational development of Becoming. In connection to this, Nietzsche identifies some aspects of the theological underpinnings of Hegel’s absolute Idealism. At first it seems that God is unprovable because of (Kant’s) epistemological theory (*erkenntnistheoretischen Bewegung*). Or, it may seem as though Hegel’s position is that we may be able to prove the existence of God but not as something that *is* but as something that *becomes*. For

¹⁴⁴ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 12, 2 [151].

¹⁴⁵ See *KSA* 7, 29 [51].

¹⁴⁶ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 12, 2 [165].

Nietzsche this theological attitude of Hegel's is due to the influence of the historical sense that oversteps into the realm of nature. Finally, Nietzsche claims that Hegel's philosophy never achieves a deep critique of the ideal (as handed down from the Platonic tradition) and this is perhaps why he claims in the beginning of the passage that in connection to Plato's philosophy, Hegel's philosophy is a form of reaction or perhaps even a Romantic regression.

Nietzsche claims that the Western metaphysical tradition has opposed Being to non-Being rather than to Becoming and that this has led to nihilism: "Die logische Weltverneinung und Nihilisirung folgt daraus, daß wir Sein dem Nichtsein entgegensetzen müssen, und daß der Begriff „Werden“ geleugnet wird („etwas wird“) wenn das Sein---" ¹⁴⁷ Note that this passage is fragmentary as the three lines at the end indicate (This is the convention that the KSA editors have adopted). so that we cannot rely on it as much as on a fully published passage that might have been approved by Nietzsche for publication. ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], KSA 12, 9 [62].

¹⁴⁸ I have not discussed the problem of the *Nachlass* extensively but here is my philosophy concerning it: I do not take the *Nachlass* to be quite as reliable, philosophically, as Nietzsche's published works. We must always double-check affirmations in the *Nachlass* against the published corpus. If there is ambiguity, the published corpus must be the decisive factor invoked. However, some topics such as nihilism and Becoming are overwhelmingly found in the *Nachlass*. In that case, because we do not have the choice, the passages of the *Nachlass* must be given priority and trusted as much as the published corpus. The deeper reason for such an interpretative philosophy has to do with the influence of the schools of hermeneutics and deconstruction on our interpretative practice. It is my opinion that these schools have shown that the *mens auctoris* should not be the most important factor in an interpretative reconstruction of an author's thought. Thus, the fact that the *mens auctoris* is not as strongly represented in the *Nachlass* as in the published corpus is not a strong enough argument to disregard the passages in the *Nachlass*, especially for the themes that are under-represented in the published corpus. This problem of the how to treat the *Nachlass*, methodologically in an interpretation of Nietzsche's thought, has been characterized by Karl Schlechta as the problem of the "lumpers" and "splitters". The "lumpers" accept the *Nachlass* as being as "valid" as the published works to develop fertile and legitimate interpretations of Nietzsche's thought. The "splitters" on the other hand accept as having interpretative normativity only the published works and are very suspicious of any attempts to use the *Nachlass* in order to develop legitimate interpretations of Nietzsche's thought. According to the previous characterization of my position, I would have to be characterized as a 'quasi'-"lumper". However, throughout this dissertation, I have considered the totality of the *Nachlass*, something that is unavoidable given the frequency of the repetition of the concept of Becoming in the *Nachlass*.

The previous passage is nevertheless important because as I have argued before, Nietzsche believes that the negation and nihilation of the world cannot come to pass because we have opposed to the concept of Being that the concept of non-Being, instead of opposing to it the concept of Becoming. By opposing the concept of Becoming to the traditional Western concept of Being, Nietzsche undermines the whole Western metaphysical edifice and in a sense turns it upside down. Heidegger has claimed that this inversion of Platonism in which Nietzsche seems to merely replace Being with Becoming in order to affirm the second term is in fact a mere entrenchment in Platonism and in metaphysics.¹⁴⁹ This is where my reading significantly parts ways with Heidegger's reading. I believe that Nietzsche develops through his concept of Becoming a metaphysics of Becoming that does not merely replace and invert the philosophy of Being but that rather overcomes and deconstructs all forms of Being.

Nietzsche wants to oppose Becoming to Being (since Being is understood as a generalization of (*Verallgemeinerung*) of not-Becoming (*nicht-werdend*)) in order to criticize the Western metaphysical tradition:

„Sein“ als Verallgemeinerung des Begriffs „*Leben*“ (athmen)
 „beseelt sein, „wollen, wirken“ „werden“ Gegensatz ist:
 „unbeseelt sein“, „*nicht-werdend*“; „*nicht-wollend*“. Also: es wird
 dem „Seienden“ nicht das Nicht-seiende, *nicht* das Scheinbare,
 auch nicht das Todte entgegengesetzt (denn todtsein kann nur
 etwas, das auch leben kann)...¹⁵⁰

This move by Nietzsche is a constant in his attempt to describe the concept of Becoming. Nietzsche opposes Becoming to Being and claims that the Western metaphysical tradition has been mistaken in claiming that the opposite of Being was non-Being. By putting the emphasis on Becoming, Nietzsche deconstructs the concept of Being as permanent

¹⁴⁹ „Die Umkehrung beseitigt die Platonische Grundstellung nicht, sondern verfestigt sie gerade durch den Anschein, als sei sie beseitigt.“ Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, p.469, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1961.

¹⁵⁰ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 12, 9 [63].

presence *avant la lettre*. The idea that time and space are a perpetual becoming already anticipates, to a certain extent, Heidegger's claims that the Western philosophical tradition has conceived Being as permanent presence. But Becoming is also an essential concept when it is related and helps to explain the concept of the ego.

The next passage shows that Nietzsche believes that the concept of the ego has been lifted out of the perpetual change and instability of Becoming and projected onto Being. Typically, Nietzsche believes that the concept of metaphysical substance is something that is psychologically derived from the concept of the ego. We believe in a stable ego out of practical survival needs and despite the testimony of our senses and out of this stability we derive the whole substance-metaphysics:

*Der psychologische Irrthum, aus dem der Gegensatz-Begriff „moralisch“ und „unmoralisch“ entstanden ist. „selbstlos“, „unegoistisch“, „selbstverleugnend“ — alles unreal, fingirt. Fehlerhafter Dogmatismus in Betreff des „ego“: dasselbe als atomistisch genommen, in einem falschen Gegensatz zum „Nicht-ich“; insgleichen aus dem Werden herausgelöst, als etwas Seiendes. Die falsche Versubstanzialisierung des Ich: diese (in dem Glauben an die individuelle Unsterblichkeit) besonders unter dem Druck religiös-moralischer Zucht zum Glaubensartikel gemacht...*¹⁵¹

In the next passage, Nietzsche's concept of value is essentially linked to life and Becoming. Being and beings are "hineingelegt", posited inside of Becoming by us. Nietzsche also alludes in this passage to two more important concepts for the understanding of his fundamental concept of will to power: the *Herrschaftsgebilde* (constructs of domination) and the *Willenspunktationen* (punctuations of the will):

Der Gesichtspunkt des „Werths“ ist der Gesichtspunkt von *Erhaltungs-Steigerungs-Bedingungen* in Hinsicht auf complexe Gebilde von relativer Dauer des Lebens innerhalb des Werdens: es giebt keine dauerhaften letzten Einheiten, keine Atome, keine

¹⁵¹ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 12, 10 [57].

Monaden: auch hier ist „das Seiende“ erst von uns *hineingelegt*, (aus praktischen, nützlichen perspektivischen Gründen): „Herrschafts-Gebilde“; die Sphäre des Beherrschenden fortwährend wachsend oder periodisch abnehmend, zunehmend; oder, unter der Gunst und Ungunst der Umstände (der Ernährung) „Werth“ ist wesentlich der Gesichtspunkt für das Zunehmen oder Abnehmen dieser herrschaftlichen Centren („Vielheiten“ jedenfalls, aber die „Einheit“ ist in der Natur des Werdens gar nicht vorhanden) *ein Quantum Macht*, ein Werden, insofern nichts darin den Charakter des „Seins“ hat;¹⁵²

This passage is crucial because it brings together many of Nietzsche's theses.

According to Müller-Lauter, Nietzsche has a whole “doctrine” (*Lehre*) of *Herrschaftsgebilde*.¹⁵³ Similarly, the *Willenspunktationen* play a very important role in Nietzsche's explanation of the nature of the will to power. What I want to focus on, however is how these concepts relate to the concept of Becoming. The idea that the point of view (*Gesichtspunkt*) of value is that of preservation-enhancement-conditions (*Erhaltungs-Steigerungs-Bedingungen*) in light of complexes of power-formations (*Gebilde*)¹⁵⁴ of relative duration of life within Becoming.

Thus the power-formations of life can enhance and “aggregate” themselves within Becoming or they can lose power and go under, in which case they “disaggregate” themselves. Thus, increase in power cannot be an aim or a *telos* from Becoming since there is both aggregation of power-structures and disaggregation of these same structures. This tension appears in Nietzsche between a wills to power that individually will power and the absence of a general, hypostasized goal for the totality of Becoming that is a consequence of the teaching of nihilism.

¹⁵² [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 13, 11 [73].

¹⁵³ Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1999, p.325.

¹⁵⁴ “Gebilde” is a complex German word that can be translated into English as “structure”, “figure” and even “image”.

The power structures that disaggregate themselves constantly go under and re-surface in new aggregations but the world-totality and Becoming do not aim at anything. Nothing is achieved and nothing is reached in Becoming and this is a direct result of the teaching of nihilism.

Another important aspect of the previous passage is the notion that beings (and the meaning of beings) is *hineingelegt* by us. This idea of the “Hineinlegung” of Being and of meaning is important for an important debate that has occurred in the secondary literature and which seeks to understand whether Nietzsche can be retrieved for the project of philosophical hermeneutics. Hofman and Figl¹⁵⁵ have mainly led the discussion of the possible hermeneutical affiliations and consequences of Nietzsche’s thought. For Heidegger and Gadamer who are the main representatives of philosophical hermeneutics in the twentieth-century Being and meaning are *ausgelegt*, interpreted and discovered rather than *hineingelegt* and created as they seem to be for Nietzsche.

insofern die Ausdrucksmittel der Sprache sind unbrauchbar, um das Werden auszudrücken: es gehört zu unserem *unablöslichen Bedürfnis der Erhaltung*, beständig die eine gröbere Welt von *Bleibendem*, von „Dingen“ usw. zu setzen. Relativ, dürfen wir von Atomen und Monaden reden: und gewiß ist, daß die *kleinste Welt an Dauer die dauerhafteste ist...es giebt keinen Willen*: es giebt Willens-Punktationen, die beständig ihre Macht mehrten oder verlieren.¹⁵⁶

The concept of *Willens-Punktationen* is very important and must be put in relation to Nietzsche’s concepts of *Kraftcentren* and *Machtwillen*. The quantas of power are distributed in world-Becoming according to a matrix of centre of force and power-centers. These centers of force are also what Nietzsche calls punctuations of the will (*Willens-Punktationen*). These configurations of power-wills and wills to power are so

¹⁵⁵ Johann Figl, *Interpretation als philosophisches Prinzip*, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1982, and Johann Nepomuk Hofman, *Wahrheit, Perspektive, Interpretation, Nietzsche und die philosophische Hermeneutik*, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1994.

distributed that they exist only in their expression. They are, practically speaking, so infinitely small and so chaotically distributed that they only exist through the dynamic expression of their activity.

Nietzsche writes: “Der Sinn des Werdens muß in jedem Augenblick erfüllt, erreicht, vollendet sein.”¹⁵⁷ The meaning of Becoming has to be fulfilled, realized and perfected in every instant (*Augenblick*) as is clearly asserted by Nietzsche. So here, Nietzsche admits that Becoming has a meaning when he speaks of the “Sinn des Werdens”. This contradicts *KSA 13*, 11 [99], where Nietzsche claims that Becoming aims at nothing and that the meaning of Becoming is only *hineingelegt*. It is important to clarify the problem of the “meaning of Becoming” in Nietzsche’s thought since this will allow us to understand if Nietzsche can be claimed for the hermeneutical project as some commentators (Hofman and Figl mainly) have done.

KSA 13, 11 [82] is related to *KSA 13*, 11 [72] in which Nietzsche claims that: “das Werden muß gerechtfertigt erscheinen in jedem Augenblick (oder unabwerthbar: was auf Eins hinausläuft); es darf absolut nicht das Gegenwärtige um eines Zukünftigen wegen oder das Vergangene um des Gegenwärtigen willen gerechtfertigt werden.” The notion of a justification is related to the one of meaning and fulfillment. If the meaning of Becoming is fulfilled in every moment (*Augenblick*) then it is possible to believe that it is also justified in every moment. The three aspects of time, the past, the present and the future must exist according to Nietzsche’s vision as perfectly independent from each other. They are not exstatically unified. Each aspect exists independently: the past does not justify the present and the present does not justify the future.

In the next citation, Nietzsche contrasts the will to semblance, illusion and

¹⁵⁶ [Nietzsche’s emphasis, P.C.], *KSA 13*, 11 [73].

¹⁵⁷ *KSA 13*, 11 [82].

Becoming with that to truth and Being, and argues that the former is deeper and more metaphysical than the will to truth and to Being: “Der Wille zum Schein, zur Illusion, zur Täuschung, zum Werden und Wechseln ist tiefer, „metaphysischer“ als der Wille zur Wahrheit, zur Wirklichkeit, zum Sein: die Lust ist ursprünglicher als der Schmerz; der letztere ist selbst nur die Folge eines Willens zur Lust ”¹⁵⁸ This passage is not so surprising given what we know of Nietzsche’s first Romantic period, but it is surprising that even so late in his philosophical career (1887-1889), Nietzsche still preserves this evaluation of the couples semblance, Becoming and truth, Being almost unchanged. For Nietzsche reality/actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is inconsistent and false. This makes difficult and problematic the identification of will to power and eternal recurrence that is claimed by Heidegger in terms of the *actuating, actuality* of eternity.¹⁵⁹

Nietzsche alludes to the circular nature of Becoming. The fact that Becoming is interpreted as a ring and as something that can be stabilized by the concept of eternal recurrence of the same is instrumental in Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche:

Wenn das Werden ein großer Ring ist, so ist Jegliches gleich werth, ewig, nothwendig ... In allen Correlationen von Ja und Nein, von Vorziehen und Abweisen, Lieben und Hassen drückt sich nur eine Perspektive, ein Interesse bestimmter Typen des Lebens aus: an sich redet Alles, was ist, das Ja.¹⁶⁰

This passage is important because it shows that the circularity of Becoming, its ring-like nature makes everything equal, eternal and necessary. This circularity of Becoming is connected to the circularity of eternal recurrence of the same in which the rotation of Becoming creates a “permanentization” of Becoming. This is Heidegger’s reading of

¹⁵⁸ KSA 13, 14 [18].

¹⁵⁹ “Die Augenblicklichkeit des Schaffens ist das Wesen der wirklichen, wirkenden Ewigkeit, die ihre höchste Schärfe und Weite gewinnt als der Augenblick der Ewigkeit der Wiederkunft des Gleichen.” Heidegger, *op.cit.* p.467. “The ‘momentary’ character of creation is the essence of actual, actuating eternity, which achieves its greatest breadth and keenest edge as the moment of eternity in the return of the same.” Heidegger, *Nietzsche 2*, p.203.

¹⁶⁰ KSA 13, 14 [31].

Becoming which to a certain extent reifies the fluid and impermanent Becoming of Nietzsche's thought.

Conclusion

What differentiates the usage of the concept of Becoming in the late works and in the *Nachlass* of that period, is the fact that Becoming is instrumentalized in order to *prove* the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. In the early writings, Becoming is associated with a romantic metaphysics that still believes that suffering is the essence of all Being. Being and Becoming are both a semblance (*Schein*) that is secreted from the Schopenhauerian *Ureinen*. Teleology is not yet removed from Becoming in the early

writings. The negative *telos* of the early works is the increase in suffering. The will is still accepted as noumenon and Nietzsche has not yet criticized the two-world theory that Schopenhauer inherits from Kant (the dichotomy *Ding-an-sich*, phenomenon) and Plato (Idea, beings). In the late works, the two-world theory has been completely given up and the *telos* has been removed from Becoming. This is a result of the critical middle-phase in which Nietzsche becomes aware of the problematic nature of the *Ding-an-sich*, phenomenon dichotomy. (See HaH, Book I, Chapter I) In the late phase of Nietzsche's thought, Becoming is the thought that is used at once to *prove* eternal recurrence and also to bridge the gap between the will to power and eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche claims that the *telos* of Becoming is used to find a stable end-state. From this end-state, a second, metaphysical world is projected on the beyond. By opposing the end-state of Becoming, Nietzsche manages to definitively criticize metaphysics: this is the lesson of the History of an Error. But there is a paradox here. Eternal recurrence is a highly metaphysical concept. Every moment recurs and yet passes on. By attempting to think through the mystery of time, eternal recurrence sinks into the core of metaphysical thought. The only way every time-instant can recur and at the same time pass, is if time is thought on the model of a circle and by opposing it to the linear-spatial time arrow or series. Eternal recurrence can only be conceived if time is spatially understood as circular (see *Zarathustra*). But time in Nietzsche is always tied to the concept of Becoming. Becoming is constituted by the configuration of time, space and matter. This is the cosmological and quasi-physical aspect of Becoming, which is absent from Nietzsche's early works. The strongest argument for eternal recurrence is that time being infinite (and circular), space being finite, matter being finite i.e. the sum of the space-time configurations are finite. Since the world-Becoming passes through all the possible space-matter configurations in an infinite time, this entails the eternal-recurrence

of all space-matter configurations. This argument is purely cosmological and physical but it has metaphysical implications.

Section 2: Critical Analysis of the Secondary Literature

2.1 Critique of Heidegger's Interpretation of Nietzsche

Heidegger's essential insight into Nietzsche's metaphysics can be seen to be the thesis of the unity of the eternal recurrence and will to power. This insight is important because it allows us to see Nietzsche's philosophy in a systematic light that was previously unavailable to us. Heidegger complements this thesis with a second affirmation which pertains to the dialectical nature of Nietzsche's thought and this allows Heidegger to reduce Nietzsche to the thought of his great predecessor and antipode, Hegel. Despite such an honor for Nietzsche, it still does not do justice to his originality with respect to Hegel. Deleuze has already pointed out the problematical nature of such a reduction.¹⁶¹

However, I believe that it is worthwhile to return to examine the Heideggerian reading because even though Deleuze has clearly identified what distinguishes Nietzsche from Hegel, Deleuze's reading has not focused enough on clarifying how Nietzsche views the concept of Becoming differently than Hegel.

My thesis in this section will be that the unification of the thoughts of eternal recurrence and will to power is done through what Heidegger calls a "permanentization" of Becoming. This permanentization of Becoming is to a certain extent a reification¹⁶² of Nietzsche's more fluid concept of Becoming but Heidegger's interpretation is nonetheless fruitful and productive. This is the case because Heidegger claims that

¹⁶¹ Deleuze, Nietzsche et la philosophie, p.280, PUF, Paris, 1973.

¹⁶² Reification is not understood in Marx's (the most famous uses are in the *Critique of Political Economy* and in *The Economic Manuscripts*) and Lukács' famous re-appropriation from 1923 in *History and Class Consciousness*. It is rather understood as a fixation and a stripping of dynamism that does evoke the original meaning of reification i.e. the turning of something abstract or fluid and dynamic into a concrete and stable thing.

Nietzsche is still operating, despite his fluid concept of Becoming, with the traditional metaphysical concept of time that is conceived in terms of the temporality of the present.

Heidegger's fundamental contribution to the debate that was going on in the 1930's in Nietzsche scholarship around the relationship between will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same is to have established that there must be a unity between these two concepts. This fact has been contested in the literature after Heidegger's interpretation. On the one hand Derrida's reading of Nietzsche is explicitly anti-Heideggerian insofar as it refuses to see in the eternal recurrence of the same and in Nietzsche's thought in general any trace of totality, even the totality of fragments or of aphorisms.¹⁶³ On the other hand, Müller-Lauter has attracted attention to the fact that thinking the inner unity of will to power and eternal recurrence of the same by associating them to *essentia* (will to power) and *existentia* (eternal recurrence of the same) is highly problematical.¹⁶⁴

The thesis of the unity of eternal recurrence and will to power is most clearly set out in a text from 1939 called the *Eternal Recurrence of the Same and the Will to Power*. This text made up the two concluding texts to the lecture the *Wille zur Macht als Erkenntnis*¹⁶⁵ but was never delivered. The unity of the two concepts is also apparent in Heidegger's essay *Nietzsche's Metaphysics* and so this text will also serve as a basis for the construction of my reading.

Will to power is made up of some fundamental aspects. These aspects are truth, play of forces, conditions of enhancement and preservation, life and art. I will try to indicate as much as possible what Heidegger says about Nietzsche's philosophy when

¹⁶³ See Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, quoted in Ernst Behler, *Nietzsche-Derrida, Derrida-Nietzsche, Confrontations*, p.113, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988.

¹⁶⁴ Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsches Lehre des Willens zur Macht*, in *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1999, note 64, p.47.

¹⁶⁵ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche I*.

these claims are not obvious from a Nietzschean point of view. Heidegger believes Nietzsche to be a thinker of a single thought. For him, this single thought is the thought of will to power as what constitutes the basic character of beings.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Heidegger claims that Nietzsche is a thinker who says that all being is ultimately will to power. In order to show that will to power is Nietzsche's single thought, Heidegger notoriously decides to focus his reading on the posthumously published *Will to Power*.

Heidegger begins by stating that will and power are, for Nietzsche, two aspects of the same thing. Will is something which seeks to increase itself, to overcome itself. Will always wills to be more. Similarly, power is something which is inherently oriented towards its own enhancement. Power is viscerally oriented towards more power, towards its own expansion.

It is important to understand that for Heidegger, will to power, which he interprets as the concept of Being, is an ontological notion. Insofar as Heidegger wishes to understand will to power both as an ontological notion and as Nietzsche's one and only thought, he must, to a certain extent, reduce Nietzsche's thought to ontology. But it is not obvious that this can be done without disregarding important aspects of Nietzsche's thought.

The second part of my summary of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation deals with Heidegger's analysis of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and its relationship to will to power, as expounded both in the lecture given during the summer of the year 1937 called the *Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. The sections of the, *Eternal Recurrence of the Same*

¹⁶⁶ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche I*, p.12, (Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche*, Vol.1, p.4) Whether Nietzsche's one and essential thought is will to power or the eternal recurrence of the same is not altogether clear in Heidegger's work. There does seem to be a stronger emphasis on the eternal recurrence of the same as Heidegger's interpretation progresses. This is what makes a definitive evaluation of Heidegger's work on Nietzsche so difficult. Heidegger's interpretation is highly evolutive and even at times approaches incoherence. In *Was heisst Denken*, it seems like the eternal recurrence has attained a certain pre-eminence over will to power.

lecture which I consider to be key to summarizing Heidegger's interpretation are sections 12, 13, and 14, and accordingly, I have focused my reading on them.

I will analyze the reconstruction given by Heidegger in the lecture course entitled *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. This reconstruction does not focus so much on the notion of will to power. Will to power is, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche's original way of re-thinking the concept of Becoming. Heidegger begins by asserting that the general character of force yields the finitude of Being and its Becoming. It must be said that Nietzsche never explicitly writes this. At most Nietzsche claims that the general concept of force is finite and that the concept of matter is finite but he never concludes that Being and Becoming are finite as Heidegger claims.

However, from the thesis of the finitude of Being and Becoming it follows according to Heidegger that the advance and progress of cosmic occurrence into infinity is impossible. This in turn implies that the world's Becoming must turn back onto itself. But a thesis identified by Heidegger in Nietzsche's *Nachlass* (this thesis is also expressed poetically in Vom Gesicht und Rätsel in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) implies that the world's becoming runs backward and forward in endless (infinite) time as real time. Again this thesis is more or less grounded in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*. Nietzsche claims in the *Nachlass* that an infinite regress is not an impossibility whereas an infinite progress is something illogical and unthinkable and he refers to Eugen Dühring critically in this context.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ "[...] Man hat neuerdings mehrfach in dem Begriff Zeit-Unendlichkeit der Welt nach hinten einen Widerspruch finden gewollt: man hat ihn selbst gefunden, um den Preis freilich, dabei <den> Kopf mit dem Schwanz zu verwechseln. Nichts kann mich hindern, von diesem Augenblick an rückwärts rechnend zu sagen „ich werde nie dabei an ein Ende kommen“: wie ich vom gleichen Augenblick vorwärts rechnen kann, ins Unendliche hinaus. Erst wenn ich den Fehler machen wollte - ich werde mich hüten, es zu thun - diesen korrekten Begriff eines regressus in infinitum gleichzusetzen mit einem gar nicht vollziehbaren Begriff eines unendlichen progressus bis jetzt, wenn ich die Richtung (vorwärts oder rückwärts) als logisch indifferent setzte, würde ich den Kopf, diesen Augenblick, als Schwanz zu fassen bekommen: das bleibe Ihnen überlassen, mein Herr Dühring!" *KSA* 13, 14 [188]. The following translation is given by Kaufmann in *Will to Power* 1066: "Lately on has sought several times to find a contradiction in the concept 'temporal infinity of the world in the past' (regressus in infinitum): one has even found it, although at the cost of confusing the head with the tail. Nothing can prevent me from reckoning backward from this moment and

However, Heidegger claims that the finite Becoming which runs its course in such infinite time must have achieved some kind of homeostasis or equilibrium since the finite possibilities of Becoming must be exhausted in the infinite flow of real time. This claim by Heidegger is also problematical since Nietzsche, at least in the early works on the pre-Socratics (most notably in “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks”) states that becoming is eternal, infinite and absolute. It is possible that in the later *Nachlass*, a finitization and permanentization of Becoming could be produced through the application of the character of Being onto Becoming. But this thesis pre-supposes that Becoming can be ultimately reduced to the thought of Being in Nietzsche’s thought. This is not obvious from a Nietzschean point of view.

Nietzsche affirms that since no homeostasis of the state of Becoming has been achieved, this means that no such state of equilibrium can ever be achieved. This implies that the world is in permanent Becoming: it turns back on itself and flows into an eternal becoming. But since this cosmic Becoming takes place continuously and does not cease whenever its finite possibilities are exhausted this pre-supposes that it must have repeated itself and that this repetition has occurred an infinite number of times. Since this Becoming is permanent, it will continue to repeat itself in the future. But since the world totality is finite in the configurations of its Becoming as asserted in another thesis found by Heidegger in Nietzsche’s *Nachlass*, the possibilities of transformation in its collective character are finite as well. Because the nexus of effects among the various processes of Becoming is a closed nexus, every single process of Becoming must draw the entire past in its wake. Alternatively, since the process of Becoming works its effects ahead, it must

saying “I shall never reach the end”; just as I can reckon forward from the same moment into the infinite. Only if I made the mistake-I shall guard against it-of equating this correct concept of a regressus in infinitum with an utterly unrealizable concept of a finite progressus up to this present, only if I suppose the that the direction (forward or backward) is logically a matter of indifference, would I take the head-this moment-for the tail: I shall leave that to you, my dear Herr Dühring!-”

propel all things forward. This in turn entails that every process of Becoming must reproduce itself. Thus the eternal recurrence of the totality of world Becoming must be a recurrence of the same.¹⁶⁸

There is a tension in the previous argument. On the one hand, Nietzsche believes that there is no equilibrium in the state of world-movement (or world-Becoming). This means that what returns or recurs is becoming and not Being. However, Heidegger is interested in showing that Being and Becoming are finite and that a permanentization of Becoming is operated through the thought of the eternal recurrence. This argument has been contested in the literature on Nietzsche, mainly by Gilles Deleuze in *Nietzsche et la philosophie*.¹⁶⁹ I will elaborate in Section 3.4 on how Deleuze criticizes Heidegger.

I would like now to critically examine Heidegger's interpretation of the unity between will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same and show how this unity is grounded in the "permanentization" of Becoming. Heidegger's thesis about this unity is not explained very thoroughly in his Nietzsche lectures. Heidegger writes:

Der Wille zur Macht wird jetzt begreifbar als Beständigung der Überhöhung, d.h. des Werdens, und somit als gewandelte Bestimmung des metaphysischen Leitenentwurfs. Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen trägt gleichsam ihr Wesen als ständige Beständigung des Werdens des Ständigen vor sich her.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ How does the previous dialectic of will to power and eternal recurrence (because that's the way Heidegger treats it, in dialectical fashion, which in itself might be a distortion of Nietzsche's thought) fit in with the Nietzschean argument that there cannot be an equilibrium in the state of the world quoted by Heidegger in vol.I :

- 1) if there had been a state of equilibrium in the world it would have been reached by now
- 2) it has not been reached (What kind of criteria need to be applied here logical, phenomenological, scientifico-empirical ?) hence
- 3) there cannot be such a state of equilibrium ?

¹⁶⁹ Deleuze, G., *op.cit.*, p.81.

¹⁷⁰ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche II*, p.14. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, p.167). "Will to power may now be conceived of as the permanentizing of surpassment, that is, of becoming; hence as a transformed determination of the guiding metaphysical projection. The eternal recurrence of the same unfurls and displays its essence, so to speak, as the most constant permanentizing of the becoming of what is constant."

The fact that will to power may be conceived as the permanentizing of surpassment (*Überhöhung*) and as a transformed determination of the guiding metaphysical projection is what is truly revolutionary in Nietzsche's philosophy according to Heidegger. The permanentization of Becoming and the fact that it grounds the unification of will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same is what allows Heidegger to claim that Nietzsche completes the Western metaphysical tradition. However, insofar as Nietzsche still thinks time as presence and as permanence, he stands clearly, according to Heidegger, within Western metaphysics.

This idea of permanentization of becoming is related by Heidegger to the concept of "presencing". Presencing and the permanentization of presencing (*Anwesenheit*) correspond to the concept of time that metaphysics operates with. Thus Heidegger identifies in Nietzsche's philosophy a reification of the concept of Becoming and of the concept of time that he sees present in the metaphysical tradition as a whole. This reification of time and Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy is even more clearly articulated by Heidegger in *Was heisst Denken* where Heidegger claims that Nietzsche still operates with the discrete concept of time-instants (*jetzt-Zeit*) of the tradition.¹⁷¹

Heidegger does something like a genealogy of the *Was-sein* (what-Being) and the *Dass-sein* (that-Being) in the history of metaphysics (especially in Plato and Aristotle). Heidegger shows the unification that he operates between will to power and eternal recurrence of the same in the following way:

Im voraus sind die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen und der Wille zur Macht als Grundbestimmungen des Seienden im Ganzen und als solchen begriffen, und zwar der Wille zur Macht als die endgeschichtliche Prägung des Was-seins, die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen als die des Dass-seins.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Heidegger, M., *Was heisst Denken*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1954, p.78, from now this book will be referred to as *Was heisst Denken*.

¹⁷² Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche II*, p.14. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, p.168). "From the outset, the eternal

If I understand Heidegger's position correctly, will to power and eternal recurrence constitute a unity because these two thoughts both constantly refer to aspects of Being and Becoming. Heidegger sometimes seems to want to identify will to power with Becoming and the eternal recurrence with Being. But what allows Heidegger to affirm that will to power and eternal recurrence say the selfsame thing is the fact that there is a relation between will to power, eternal recurrence and the permanentization of Becoming.

If will to power seems to be sometimes identified with Becoming, it also is the "Being of beings" according to Heidegger's reading. Eternal recurrence seems to be identified with Being ("that everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of Being"¹⁷³ as Nietzsche puts it) but it is also an attempt, according to Heidegger, by Nietzsche to unite Being and Becoming, action and reaction into a single thought. Thus we cannot clearly map Becoming to will to power and Being to eternal recurrence. This would also be surprising since will to power corresponds to *essentia* and eternal recurrence to *existentia* and it seems that Being and *essentia* and Becoming and *existentia* should be paired together rather than the opposite.¹⁷⁴ The only way to unify the two thoughts together seems to be afforded by noticing that they both refer to the *permanentization* of Becoming.

recurrence of the same and will to power are grasped as fundamental determinations of Beings as such and as a whole-will to power as the peculiar coinage of 'what-Being' at the historic end, and eternal recurrence of the same as the coinage of 'that-Being'."

¹⁷³ For German original see *KSA* 12, 7 [54]. For English translation, see *Will to Power*, 617.

¹⁷⁴ Heidegger would like to identify the origin of the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia*. He analyzes the Aristotelian distinction between *ousia*, *morphe* and *hyle* but concludes that the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* cannot be simply traced back to these Aristotelian distinctions. Heidegger wishes to point out that the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* vanishes and is destroyed at the end of metaphysics. The problem is that such a distinction cannot be maintained in the wake of the being, which we ourselves are and which Heidegger calls *Dasein*. If the substance of *Dasein* is existence, Heidegger wants to characterize this word and concept as a productive-intentional comportment and not in the way that the medieval Scholastics understood *existentia*. When it comes to the whatness or *essentia* of

In fact it is my thesis that Heidegger ultimately identifies will to power with eternal recurrence in order to develop his concept of onto-theology.

Heidegger's Nietzsche reading is without a doubt strong. What makes it so fascinating is that at the same time as it sheds unprecedented light on Nietzsche's philosophy, it also manages to show how this philosophy is an *Auseinandersetzung* with all of the Western philosophical and metaphysical tradition. But an important question that needs to be answered is how, within Nietzsche scholarship, we can progress with respect to Heidegger's Nietzsche reading ?

I have already mentioned at the beginning of this section that Heidegger believes he can criticize Nietzsche because Nietzsche still functions with a reified, traditional concept of time that conceives of temporality as presence. Surely, there are traces of "permanentization" and "presencing" in Nietzsche's thought. This permanentization is introduced in Nietzsche's conceptuality through the thought of eternal recurrence of the same. But for Nietzsche what recurs as such is becoming as infinite and impermanent and not Being. This has been identified by Deleuze when he claims that "Revenir, l'être de tout ce qui devient".¹⁷⁵ The same that recurs in eternal recurrence is not the identical. Heidegger has clarified the distinction between the same and the identical in The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics¹⁷⁶, he writes:

But the same is not the merely identical. In the merely identical, difference disappears. In the same, the difference appears and appears all the more pressingly, the more resolutely thinking is concerned with the same matter in the same way.

Heidegger, Lukács and Jaspers all believed that ultimately the eternal recurrence of the same had to point to the priority of Being in Nietzsche's thought over becoming. It

Dasein, Heidegger again specifies that this term cannot apply to *Dasein*. Rather *Dasein* can be characterized by its "whoness" not by its "whatness".

¹⁷⁵ Deleuze, G., *op.cit.*, p.54.

is only with Deleuze that Nietzsche scholarship advanced beyond thinking the eternal recurrence of the same in terms of Being.

An important aspect of Deleuze's reading is his clarification of the problem of the critique of the initial state and final state of world-movement or world-becoming. This problem is one of the most interesting focuses of potential research on the concept of Becoming in the Nietzschean *Nachlass*.¹⁷⁷ With this problem Deleuze reconstructs Nietzsche's conception of the eternal recurrence in an entirely original way with respect to Heidegger. For Deleuze returning is the Being of becoming. ("Revenir, l'être de tout ce qui devient."¹⁷⁸) Thus, Deleuze manages to show against Heidegger (and indirectly against Lukács and Jaspers) that the thought of eternal recurrence is not a thought that pertains to Being or to the question of Being but to Becoming. To become is to recur or return and to return or to recur is to become: this is Nietzsche's fundamental teaching of eternal recurrence of the same.

Heidegger writes in *Was heisst denken*: "Der Wille wird frei vom Widrigen des 'Es war', wenn er die ständige Wiederkehr von allem 'Es war' will. Der Wille ist erlöst vom Widerwillen, wenn er die ständige Wiederkehr des Gleichen will."¹⁷⁹ But this transition that Heidegger makes from the "Es war" (it was) to the "Gleichen" (same) is not logically justified. The "it was" is neither fixed nor fixable and does not possess the permanentizable structure of the same that mediates between the concepts of unity and identity.

¹⁷⁶ Heidegger, M., *The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics*, in *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row, New York, 1969, translation Stambaugh, J., pp.42-76, p.45.

¹⁷⁷ See Nietzsche, F., *KSÄ 13*, 11 [152] and *KSÄ 13*, 11 [72].

¹⁷⁸ Deleuze G., *op.cit.*, p.54.

¹⁷⁹ Heidegger, M., *Was heisst Denken*, p.43, "The will becomes free from the contrariety of the 'it was' when it wills the constant recurrence of all 'it was'. The will is redeemed from ill-willing when it wills the constant recurrence of the same.

I believe that Deleuze has made some fundamental progress with respect to Heidegger when he claims that what returns is not the same as Being but Becoming as difference. This Deleuzian construal has the disadvantage of being perhaps a bit more distant from Nietzsche's original formulation of his thought as the eternal recurrence of the same, but I believe that it makes more sense from the point of view of the Nietzschean conceptuality.

Nietzsche's analysis of human psychology is operated through a critique of the historical phenomenon of Christian morality. The discussion of nihilism is also developed starting from this critique. Nietzsche operates what he calls a genealogy of morals. Nietzsche's great struggle is to liberate humanity from the straits and bounds of Christian morality also described as the morality of pity in his language. The meaning of the eternal recurrence of the same is to free man from his existential culpability. Man is guilty in virtue of the finitude of his existence. He owes something to himself in virtue of the fact that he possesses a future : he is, ek-sistant, but he has to become. He is torn in his fundamental state of ek-sistant between the past and the future : he must in a certain way co-exist between the two temporal extremes of the past and the future. There seem to be two variants of Nietzsche' thought on guilt : an ontological one and an existential one.

Nietzsche criticizes the transcendence that is present in both the Christian world-view and in the socialist utopian and revolutionary world-view by uniting them in the concept of *Transzendenz*. Heidegger himself seems to have criticized Nietzsche for his immanentism. This immanentism that seems to install will to power as technological will-to-will is elaborated starting from the concepts of life and position of values. It is not clear whether Heidegger had fully overcome this Nietzschean immanentism as early as *Being and Time* (since the philosophy expounded in that text sought to preserve certain

transcendental moments) but it is clear that the rest of his philosophy after the thirties (and especially in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*) is an effort to recover a transcendence that, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche's philosophy had partially annihilated. As an excellent Heidegger commentator has put it :

This alone suggested that it was Christianity once again that challenged the thought of this man (Heidegger, P.C.) and held him in suspense; it was once again the old transcendence and not the modern worldliness (*Diesseitigkeit*) that spoke through him.¹⁸⁰

Thus, value-positing is definitely criticized by Heidegger in Nietzsche's word : God is dead when Heidegger asserts that thinking in values does not let Being be ("*das Denken im Werte lässt nicht das Sein sein*"). The concept of life (*Leben*) is highly problematic and seems to succumb to Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's biologism. This is not clearly indicated in Heidegger but it must be retained that the openness of Being and truth as *aletheia* elaborate a Heideggerian transcendence. There is no doubt that Nietzschean immanence or immanentism is aimed at by Heidegger when he criticizes the will-to-will, the *Gestell* and the *Bestand*. The Being of technology is already articulated by Nietzsche according to Heidegger and this Being is conceptualized starting solely from immanence. As a brilliant Heidegger commentator has put it :

...as Heidegger makes Nietzsche's words his own, he substitutes , within the ' history of Being ' the contemporary technological moment for the Nietzschean moment (...) the evidence for it is to be found throughout Heidegger's texts on Nietzsche : they speak formally about Nietzsche but materially about technology as the closing field in the history of presence, as ' the release of being into machination' , but they do so with the help of the vocabulary taken from Nietzsche.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Gadamer, H.-G., *Heidegger's Ways*, Being, Spirit, God, translated by Stanley, J., Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, p.182.

¹⁸¹ Schürmann R., *Heidegger on Being and Acting : From Principles to Anarchy*, p.182. Heidegger also develops his vocabulary about technology through the intercourse with Ernst Jünger's works (*Der Arbeiter*, *Die totale Mobilmachung*) which he was reading with some of his students in the early 30's at Freiburg University.

We can perhaps affirm that Heidegger does not give an accurate portrayal of Nietzsche's philosophy as such. But he might be right in seeing in him the completion of metaphysics. The fact that Heidegger does not completely do justice to Nietzsche's philosophy has been clearly brought out in the interpretation that has been proposed by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter.

Thus Heidegger's reading is brilliant because it inserts Nietzsche's thought in the context of the Western tradition which according to Heidegger is completed by Nietzsche. However, his interpretation does not read Nietzsche only from within Nietzsche's text and conceptuality, as Müller-Lauter consistently does.

Conclusion

Heidegger was right in seeing in Nietzsche a great metaphysician to a certain extent. His was an original reading of Nietzsche. But Heidegger inevitable historicized Nietzsche. He pushed Nietzsche into his his metaphysical-hermeneutical frame of interpretation because he had an agenda. This agenda was the overcoming of his particular understanding of metaphysics as onto-theology. However as I have tried to show elsewhere in this dissertation, there are moral and political theses as well in Nietzsche and this aspect has been neglected by Heidegger. Ultimately, however, I also believe that Nietzsche has to be read as an anti-speculative, anti-Hegelian, anti-idealistic, anti-metaphysical thinker. This is due to Nietzsche's deep Heracliteanism which I think is missed by Heidegger.

The idea that Nietzsche possesses an (anti-metaphysical) metaphysic and that this (anti-metaphysical) metaphysics completes Western metaphysics is certainly interesting. But in my opinion the object of this metaphysics is not so much will to power as the concept of Becoming. Because Becoming is ultimately contradictory and in-coherent, this metaphysics of Becoming contradicts itself and moves into its immediate opposite which is an anti-metaphysics.

Will to power may be the ultimate factum to which we come as is claimed by Nietzsche but Becoming, change and movement are certainly more important facts for Nietzsche's philosophy. I have sought throughout this dissertation to show that Nietzsche eliminates the concept of teleology from within Becoming. This move puts him at odds with his great predecessors of German Idealism, Schelling and Hegel. But this move also comes into conflict with Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche that sees a continuity between the absolute subjectivity of Idealism and the inverted and complete subjectivity which is

at work in Nietzsche's philosophy. This is the case because the absolute subjectivity of idealism only completes and stabilizes itself through *teleology*. Nietzsche's inverted subjectivity of will to power is in constant movement and change and this change has no ultimate goal or purpose: there is no completion of subjectivity in Nietzsche. At most there exists an inversion but this inversion is an inversion of an inversion. The inversion is infinite in Nietzsche: it is not arrested in Being but becomes indefinitely.

Müller-Lauter writes:

Heidegger has thus made the will to power a metaphysical principle unfolding out of itself, although remaining by itself and indeed returning to its own origin. He seeks thereby to demonstrate "the inner relation of Nietzsche's will to power to Aristotle's *dunamis*, *energeia*, and *entelecheia*." He thinks he re-discovers in Nietzsche's concept of power, first potency, in the sense of *dunamis*; secondly the exercise of power in the sense of *energeia*; and thirdly the above-mentioned coming-to-itself (in the simplicity of essence) in the sense of *entelecheia*.¹⁸²

The completion of metaphysics that Heidegger ascribes to Nietzsche is accomplished through the fact that the will to power unfolds out of itself by actualizing itself in beings (thuss the *energeia* or the exercise of power which can only take place in concrete beings and not in the will to power understood as a hypostasized entity) and then returning to itself entelechically, that is, purposefully. According to this reading, the *telos* of Becoming would be an increase in power: there would be no transition from one state of Becoming to another state of Becoming without an increase in power. The purpose of any transition in World-becoming would be an increase of power. But this *telos* of increase of power is ultimately untenable. The centres of force which occur in World-becoming sometimes lose power locally even though there might be some gain in power elsewhere. There is no overall gain in power in the universe according to Nietzsche. The World-

¹⁸² *Idem*, p.20.

becoming is like a closed system, the quantity of power in it is constant, but locally, there are gains and losses that are experienced at each power-node or center of force.

Heidegger can close the metaphysical circle in his Nietzsche interpretation because he claims that the will to power returns to itself in the simplicity of its essence. Thus, the will to power has the same circular structure as the eternal recurrence of the same.

Through their circulatory movements, Heidegger manages to identify both the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same. But the will to power which is Nietzsche's attempt to re-think Becoming, lacks a *telos*.

2.2 The Status of Nietzsche Scholarship

a) The Continental Interpretations of Nietzsche

Besides Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche to which I have devoted an important place in this thesis, the other two perhaps most influential readings of Nietzsche in the twentieth century belong, historically, to Jaspers and Lukács. They are both milestones of Nietzsche interpretation and of Nietzsche's reception in the German speaking countries. Jaspers' reading had, unlike Lukács', a direct influence upon Heidegger's. Although Heidegger often polemicized with Jaspers, Jaspers' reading was very important for the development of Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. This is the case because Jaspers already put forth the thesis that Being had to be ascribed a priority over Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy through the interpretation of the eternal recurrence of the same. This idea that Being corresponds to eternal recurrence and Becoming corresponds to will to power has been taken up by Heidegger integrally.

i) Ernst Bertram

Ernst Bertram has written a very beautiful and thoughtful book on Nietzsche called *Nietzsche, Versuch einer Mythologie*.¹⁸³ Particularly relevant to this dissertation is the chapter on German Becoming. Bertram correctly points out that Nietzsche thought that for the German people the concept of Becoming had a deeper meaning than that of Being. In contrast to the Latin intellectuality for whom the concept of Being was more normative and important (one can think of Augustine as the prime representative of this intellectuality), for the Germans who were marked by the Reformation and by Luther's

¹⁸³ Bertram, E., *Nietzsche, Versuch einer Mythologie*, Georg Bondi, Berlin, 1929.

theology and philosophy, the concept of Becoming would be more evident. In this sense the following passage from Luther's Second Article from *An Argument-In Defense of All the Articles of Dr. Martin Luther Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull*, is relevant:

Dies Leben ist nicht ein Frommsein, sondern ein Frommwerden.
nicht ein Gesundsein, sondern ein Gesundwerden, überhaupt nicht
ein Wesen, sondern ein Werden, nicht eine Ruhe, sondern eine
Übung. Wir sind's noch nicht, wir werden's aber, es ist noch nicht
getan und geschehen, es ist aber im Schwang, es ist nicht das Ende,
es ist aber der Weg...

Although I do not think one can limit Nietzsche's concept of Becoming to its "German" nature, I think that Bertram shows some insight into Nietzsche's concept of Becoming.

What matters for my purposes, is that I follow Bertram's thesis that Heraclitus was one of the most important influences on Nietzsche's thought. As Bertram writes in connection to this:

Jene Betonung, jenes Heraustreiben des deutschen, und gerade des deutschen Werdens hat die Bedeutung einer Selbstzergliederung, einer Selbstkritik: im deutschen 'Werden', mit radikaler Ablehnung auch selbst des Begriffs 'Sein', muss er unter allen Umständen ein ihm Verwandtestes anerkennen, muss er sich selbst wiedererkennen; wie er sich selber am meisten in Heraklit wieder findet, so das deutsche Wesen im heraklitischen Werden-so sich im deutschen Wesen.¹⁸⁴

I stress this again and again: Nietzsche was not only interested in Heraclitus in his early philological writings but also in the late *Nachlass* of 1884-1888. His philosophy can wholly be understood by referring to the concept of Becoming.

Becoming is the middle term between the eternal recurrence and the will to power. For Nietzsche, Becoming affords an insight and a synthesis of both the nature of his most fundamental concepts of eternal recurrence and the will to power. Bertram's

¹⁸⁴ Idem, p.79.

German Becoming must be transformed, transfigured and sublated into Nietzsche's universal, eternal, absolute and infinite Becoming.

ii) Karl Löwith

Karl Löwith authored a classic study on Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence of the same called, *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*.¹⁸⁵ In this book Löwith, analyzes what he calls the *zweifächigen* aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same.

For Löwith, the eternal recurrence of the same has two aspects: an ethical-religious one (here Löwith follows Ewald and Simmel to a certain extent since they were the first to bring out and explain the ethical aspect of eternal recurrence by comparing it to the Kantian categorical imperative) which attempts to replace the Christian doctrine of immortality and a modern-physical aspect which attempts to replace and overcome Ancient cosmology.

These two aspects of the doctrine of eternal recurrence come together in Löwith's main thesis with respect to eternal recurrence: for him this Nietzschean doctrine attempts to repeat at the peak of a decadent Christian modernity an anti-Christian Antiquity.

Although, I find Löwith's reading of eternal recurrence in particular and of Nietzsche in general very deep, I disagree with his reading of eternal recurrence of the same. This is the case because I read eternal recurrence of the same starting from Nietzsche's word "God is dead". This is only possible if we re-think all of Nietzsche's philosophy starting from the essential concept of Becoming.

¹⁸⁵ Löwith, K., *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, 1956, (first published in 1935) Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1956.

iii) Eugen Fink

Along with Heidegger, Jaspers, Löwith, Müller-Lauter and Lukács, Fink is perhaps one the most important interpreters of Nietzsche in the twentieth century.

The quality of Fink's reading stems from his deep understanding of the Western philosophical tradition. It must be said however that it is not clear to what extent Fink acquires full independence from his great teacher Heidegger when it comes to the interpretation of Nietzsche. This is apparent in his conception of time which he calls the "Macht des Sein-lassens" in direct reference to Heidegger's concept of letting-be.

Another, more direct and perhaps deeper influence of Heidegger's on Fink concerns his interpretation of the eternal recurrence of the same and of Nietzsche's concept of Being. Fink claims, following Heidegger, that Nietzsche still thinks Being as permanent presence (as the *Ständig*).¹⁸⁶

It has been one of the aims of this dissertation to show that both Being and eternal recurrence are to be fundamentally understood in Nietzsche's philosophy starting from the concepts of Becoming and im-permanence. Thus we cannot follow Fink who, in the wake of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, claims that permanent presence still operates within the thought of Nietzsche.

Through his concept of radical Becoming, Nietzsche manages to think the recurrence of the same. This same recurs as the pure Becoming of the eternal recurrence of the will to power. Becoming and im-permanence are lodged within the essence of Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence of the same and within his concept of Being.

Despite these disagreements with Fink's reading of Nietzsche, it must be stated that he does not remain merely dependent of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche. In the

¹⁸⁶ Fink, E., *Nietzsches Philosophie*, p.188-189, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1960

final chapter of *Nietzsches Philosophie*, Fink claims that Nietzsche has to a certain extent overcome and not just completed the Western metaphysical tradition as Heidegger does.

This overcoming of the Western tradition according to Fink, is brought about through Nietzsche's concept of Dionysian play. It is perhaps no coincidence that *Nietzsches Philosophie* was published in 1960 which is also the year of publication of *Wahrheit und Methode*. The idea of play that is so important for Gadamer also has a central role in Fink's reading of Nietzsche.

I agree whole-heartedly with Fink's claims that when he invokes the play between Being and Becoming, Nietzsche has to a great extent stepped beyond the Western metaphysical tradition. I leave the last words to Fink:

Wo Nietzsche Sein und Werden als Spiel begreift steht er nicht mehr in der Befangenheit der Metaphysik; dort hat auch der Wille zur Macht nicht den Charakter der Vergegenständlichung des Seienden für ein vorstellendes Subjekt, sondern den Charakter der apollinischen Gestaltung, und andererseits wird in der ewigen Wiederkunft des Gleichen die allumfängliche, alles-bringende und alles-tilgende Spiel-Zeit der Welt gedacht.¹⁸⁷

iv) Karl Jaspers

Jaspers has a complex and interesting reading of Nietzsche. It is rooted in Jaspers' deep knowledge of psychology, psychiatry and also in his own original existential philosophy. For Jaspers, Nietzsche philosophizes from the depth of his being, of what Jaspers calls his *Existenz*. Because of this deep passion for knowledge, Nietzsche argues according to what Jaspers calls, alternately, a "real" and an "immanent" dialectic. Nietzsche's thought does not attain a position according to Jaspers. It is characterized by the absence of a determinate position. The real dialectic proceeds through contradictions and oppositions (Jaspers influences and anticipates Müller-Lauter's interpretation of

Becoming in Nietzsche in this respect), but it never attains a logical or methodological understanding of how these contradictions are organized. Nietzsche's thought is in perpetual movement and it never fixes itself upon a determinate thesis or position. Positions are posited and ascribed, only to immediately move into their *opposite* positions.

Despite this apparent inconsistency, Nietzsche reaches into the nook of truth. This is the case because he manages to criticize the concept of transcendence in an unprecedented way. Jaspers is referring here, to Nietzsche's word "God is dead" that also played an important role in Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche. The idea that eternal recurrence corresponds to Being and that will to power corresponds to Becoming already anticipates Heidegger's understanding of Nietzsche's fundamental metaphysical position in terms of the unity of the will to power (Becoming, *Was-sein, to ti estin*) and eternal recurrence of the same (Being, *Dass-sein, to estin*). Jaspers already senses the dangers of the nazi political appropriation of Nietzsche (the one that misled Heidegger as he himself acknowledges, however "idealized" Heidegger's notion of National-Socialism, was in 1933 in the *Rectoral Address*) and in this sense, he claims that Nietzsche is an *incomplete* thinker as the following citation testifies:

Only within the world-in knowledge of determinate objects, in working for distinct purposes, in acting so as to promote definite goals - is communicable decision and definiteness not only possible but even necessary as a condition of all meaningful *activity*. But such *activity* itself must be encompassed by an awareness of the being of Existenz, for this is the foremost bearer of all expressible meaning. Such awareness of being attains clarity through agitated communication with the original thinkers - *those who are not final and complete* - and, at the same time, through a movement of thought that never comes to rest in any proposition.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *Idem*, p.188-189.

Above all Jaspers analyzes the role of historicity in the thought of Nietzsche. Jaspers does this to show that Nietzsche had an ambivalent relationship to historicity and historicism. For Nietzsche the historical sense is what makes up for the three different types of histories described in the *Second Untimely Meditation*: monumental, antiquarian and critical. But the historical conscience is also responsible for the rise of historicism. Analyzing the sacred texts philologically and hermeneutically, in a word historically, we come to the realization that a “temporal” science separates us from the divine. Historicism can thus be held responsible for the Nietzschean affirmation that “God is dead” and the ensuing nihilism.

In this regard, Jaspers provides us with a subtle analysis of the affirmation of the death of God. He claims that Nietzsche’s relation to the affirmation “God is dead” is ambivalent. Jaspers writes: “It may also be said that this statement initiates a new and higher human reality conceived as a way of thinking that impels man upward, or it may serve to arouse us to do all the more resolutely anything that will refute it and thus gain the assurance that God is *not* dead.”¹⁸⁹

For Jaspers, although Nietzsche criticizes the belief in a transcendent world, a Platonic *hinterwelt*, Nietzsche does this by first criticizing the belief that the world or Becoming aims at anything. Thus, the critique of the true world, the world of ideas, is a function of the removal of teleology from within Becoming according to Jaspers. I am in fundamental agreement with this thesis and I have tried to show this in detail in Section 2 of this dissertation.

But for Jaspers, Nietzsche does not leave man with Nothing. Nietzsche does not sacrifice God to the Nothing. Nihilism has to be overcome and Nietzsche proposes

¹⁸⁸ [My emphasis, P.C.] Jaspers, K., *op.cit.*, p.449.

¹⁸⁹ [Jaspers’ emphasis, P.C.], *ibidem*, p.246.

concrete ways to overcome nihilism. For Jaspers the ways to overcome nihilism are the “great politics”, Nietzsche’s “world-interpretation” and the doctrine of “eternal recurrence of the same”. In Nietzsche scholarship the eternal recurrence of the same has been often identified as the way in which Nietzsche proposes to overcome nihilism. Heidegger even claims the eternal recurrence of the same is a theological thought for Nietzsche.¹⁹⁰ But the great politics has not traditionally been singled out as a way out of nihilism insofar as Nietzsche’s conceptuality is concerned. I believe that Jaspers had concrete, historical and political reasons for affirming that the great politics was a way in which nihilism could be overcome.

In the section that I will devote to Lukács’ interpretation of Nietzsche, I will show that Nietzsche was at best a *strategic* ally of the Bismarckian pseudo-democracy. Nietzsche was never in fact a thorough and fervent supporter of democracy. Thus, these analyzes by Jaspers referring to the great politics are, textually and conceptually incorrect, but they are understandable as attempts to “rescue” Nietzsche from the Nazi interpretations. Jaspers writes in conclusion to his *Nietzschebuch*:

To philosophize with Nietzsche means to be constantly taking issue with him. In the fire of his thought, one’s own existence can become purified to the point of awareness of genuine self-being when tested by the boundless honesty and danger of Nietzsche’s critical questioning. Such self-being can only be experienced as something that passes, not into existence, and not into objectivity or subjectivity of world-being, but rather into transcendence. Nietzsche does not lead one to this at once - he tries rather to free one from it. But the earnestness of the total surrender that Nietzsche achieves is – in spite of his rejection of transcendence – like an unintended simile and archetype that expresses profound experience of being consumed through transcendence. One grows shy in the presence of this incomprehensible one who is transparent to the source but not to us.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche I*, p.348.

¹⁹¹ *Idem*, p.458.

Jaspers obviously projects his own philosophical concepts of *Existenz*, *Transzendenz* and communication onto the Nietzschean conceptuality. But his reading remains one of the leading interpretations of the twentieth century. He has a balanced and fair approach to his interpretation of Nietzsche and he does justice to the concepts of opposition and contradiction that seem to be an enduring aspect of Nietzsche's thought. This aspect of the contradictions of Nietzsche's philosophy will be taken up again by Jaspers. Above all his interpretation of the death of God and his approach to historicity in Nietzsche's thought makes of Jaspers' reading one of the deepest and most challenging ones of the twentieth century.

v) Gyorgy Lukács

Lukács' reading of Nietzsche has proved to be an influential reading of Nietzsche despite its definite ideological and polemical attitude versus Nietzsche. Lukács has influenced a whole generation of Marxists who have followed him in their negative evaluation of Nietzsche. Lukács' reading of Nietzsche functions with the following methodological hypothesis. Nietzsche has to be read as a fundamentally "political" thinker. This is something that contrasts with Heidegger's and Jaspers' (Heidegger's being more metaphysical and Jaspers' more existential) readings. There are political implications to the readings of Heidegger and Jaspers but these two commentators do not necessarily see Nietzsche as a fundamentally political thinker. For Lukács, Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole can be understood as a mobilization against the ideological and political opponent that is constituted by "socialism". This might not even have been conscious for Nietzsche himself according to Lukács. But any philosophy is determined according to Lukács' orthodox Marxist thesis, by the class struggles that exist during the

immediate historical situation in which it is created. This is true of Nietzsche as well according to Lukács.

Thus Nietzsche's philosophy would be determined according to Lukács by the struggle of the bourgeoisie against its new class enemy: the socialist movement and its political ideology. Of course this blanket term "socialism" has to be contextualized. It is not obvious that "socialism" means the same thing in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. This ambiguity itself might be one of the weaknesses of Lukács's reading.

Lukács reads and criticizes Nietzsche from within his own philosophical, political and ideological position as one of the main proponents of 20th century communism (and even Stalinism, although Lukács's position is quite labile and cannot be easily subsumed under the ideology known as "Stalinism"). At times Lukács even amalgamates the Nazi appropriation with the American liberal one and this is clearly problematic as the main commentator that is criticized and taken as a model by Lukács is Walter Kauffman. It is a well-known fact that Kauffman explicitly combated the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche.

Lukács attracts the attention to one of Nietzsche's important claims from the early *Nachlass*. This claim is that slavery is necessary for any real culture. Nietzsche writes the following: "Und wenn es wahr sein sollte, dass die Griechen an ihrem Sklaventum zugrunde gegangen sind, so ist das andere viel gewisser, dass wir an dem *Mangel* des Sklaventums zugrunde gehen werden."¹⁹² Lukács claims that Nietzsche's second phase, the one that begins with the publication of *Human, All-too-Human*, is characterized by a rapprochement with liberalism, political evolutionism and democracy. This is determined according to Lukács by the political and historical context that determines Nietzsche even if unconsciously.

¹⁹² "Der griechische Staat", *KSA I*, p.769.

Nietzsche's philosophy is not easily reducible to that of bourgeois 19th century ideology. Georg Wilhelm Hegel has been often characterized as the antipode of Nietzsche. Lukács' whole book (in which the critique and polemic with Nietzsche occurs), *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, proceeds from the thesis that with the late's Schelling's critique of Hegel's idealism, German thought becomes somehow irrational and perverted and prepares the way (mediated by Nietzsche's further "irrationalization" of philosophical and political thought) for the German political catastrophe of 1933.

To get back to Lukács' analysis of Nietzsche's ethics we can say that for Lukács Nietzsche's emphasis and attempt to naturalize the "bad" affects of selfishness, brutality and instinct, is only a way to mobilize an activist bourgeoisie so that it has the good conscience for brutal and violent actions in the face of the proletariat. The rising violence and ferocity of social relations which is embodied by the Paris Commune of 1871 is something that both terrified and horrified Nietzsche. In this sense the following excerpt from a letter to von Gersdorff is important:

Wir dürfen wieder hoffen! Unsre deutsche Mission ist noch nicht vorbei! Ich bin mütiger als je: denn noch nicht alles ist unter französich-jüdischer Verflachung und 'Eleganz' und unter dem gierigen Treiben der 'Jetztzeit' zugrunde gegangen. Es gibt doch noch Tapferkeit, und zwar deutsche Tapferkeit, die etwas innerlich anderes ist als der élan unserer bedauerungswerten Nachbarn. Über den Kampf der Nationen hinaus hat uns jener *internationale Hydrakopf* [the international socialist-communist movement embodied in the Paris Commune, my emphasis, P.C.] erschreckt, der plötzlich so furchtbar zum Vorschein kam als Anzeiger ganz anderer Zukunftskämpfe.¹⁹³

Here, in this passage, Nietzsche clearly shows his revulsion towards the Paris Commune and the international socialist-communist movement that was associated with it. This

¹⁹³ Nietzsche to Carl von Gersdorff, 21 Juni 1871, *op. cit.*, Band 3, Brief 140, p.203.

aversion towards the Commune goes some way to substantiate Lukács' thesis that Nietzsche's prime opponent was, politically, the international socialist movement.

Another interesting aspect of Lukács' reading of Nietzsche is his claim that ultimately Nietzsche's racialism can be reduced to the racist theories of the Third Reich. Lukács is aware that there is a difference between the Nietzschean concept of master race and the Nazi concept that is developed by Houston Chamberlain (the key-concept here being that of "arian" race). But he invokes the authority of Lenin to claim that these concepts are identical. I think that on this point, Lukács' reading is purely ideological.

Lukács also interprets, in reading Nietzsche, his so-called atheism. I have already mentioned my position on the ambivalence of Nietzsche's atheism. I believe with Heidegger that Nietzsche is the "letzten leidenschaftlichen Gott-suchenden Philosoph".¹⁹⁴ But, to get back to Lukács' interpretation of Nietzsche's atheism, it may be said that Lukács believes Nietzsche's atheism to be ambiguous as well. He claims that Nietzsche supports a form of "religious" atheism. This religious atheism has a political agenda. This is the case because Lukács correctly claims that for Nietzsche, Christianity and socialism are inherently linked. Nietzsche believed the socialism of his epoch to be a form of neo-Christian political expression. For Lukács the critique of Christianity is merely a veiled critique of socialism. This makes sense from Lukács' general strategy to totalize all of Nietzsche's philosophy around the idea of an ideological mobilization against socialism. Is it not rather the case that Nietzsche is suspicious of socialism because it is an embodiment of the morality of pity and charity that is derived from Christian moral teaching? Lukács argues that Nietzsche is suspicious of both Christianity and socialism because the ideology of equal rights is built into both these world-views or belief

structures. Lukács argues that previous Enlightenment thinkers sought to undermine belief in Christianity because they were fighting the feudal-absolutist ideological structure that the Christian clergy was publicly defending. For Lukács, Nietzsche is trying to oppose Christianity in order to help form the reactive and reactionary ideology of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against socialism (Nietzsche is not a fascist or a proto-fascist according to Lukács but fascism and National-Socialism are *pre-figured* in his philosophy).

In my opinion, Lukács' reading is not precise enough at this juncture. He does not take into account, Nietzsche's concept of nihilism. Nietzsche thinks that socialism is a form of nihilism, but not that nihilism is a form of socialism. For Nietzsche the concept of nihilism is more fundamental than the concept of socialism. Nihilism is constituted by the death of God and the fact that the highest values lose their value. But the highest values lose their value because of the problem of historicism as I have tried to show in section 1.4. Values are posited, hold sway for a while and then, inevitably go under and lose their value. Nihilism is a function of historicism and historicity.

Lukács claims that Nietzsche is in fact not opposed to Darwin but that Nietzsche believes in a form of "inverted" social Darwinism in which the many, the weak are the ones that get the upper-hand and in which the strong, the aristocratic and noble nature is repressed. This makes sense in my opinion and there is some textual evidence for it as I have tried to show in section 1.4.

Lukács' reading of Nietzsche is related to the interpretation of the eternal recurrence of the same and of the concept of Becoming that is central to this dissertation. For Lukács, Nietzsche's concepts of Becoming and of the eternal recurrence of the same are inherently related. They are developed in such a way as to preclude the possibility of

¹⁹⁴ Heidegger, M., Die Selbstbehauptung der deutsche Universität, *Gesamtausgabe* 16, p.111.

the occurrence of something “new” in history. Leo Strauss will also be concerned with this aspect of the novelty of history in his reading of Nietzsche and I will deal with him in the part b) of this section that discusses the Anglo-American interpretations of Nietzsche. For Lukács the eternal recurrence and the Becoming of history according to Nietzsche are non-teleological in order to show that history has no goal. This lack of goal of history allows Nietzsche to affirm, indirectly, that bourgeois-capitalist society is “eternal” and “permanent”. This aspect of permanentization of the eternal recurrence of the same has already been identified by Heidegger before Lukács. But Heidegger claims that eternal recurrence permanentizes Becoming and amounts to thinking Being as permanent presence. In my opinion, Nietzsche’s removal of teleology from within Becoming allows Nietzsche to criticize the notion of Being as permanent presence. This is the case because it is only through the introduction of *entelecheia* within Becoming starting with Aristotle, that metaphysics as onto-theology is completed for the first time. By removing teleology from within Becoming, Nietzsche de-constructs onto-theology *avant la lettre*.

But Lukács does make some interesting points with respect to Nietzsche’s critique of transcendence and Becoming. For Lukács, Nietzsche has to be read in connection to the epistemology of Machism as a critic of *Transzendenz* in favor of *Immanenz*. This critique of transcendence by Nietzsche amounts to a covert critique of materialism according to Lukács. Nietzsche criticizes the transcendence that is present in both the Christian world-view and in the socialist utopian and revolutionary world-view by uniting them in the concept of *Transzendenz*.

Despite its systemacity, its depth and its influence, Lukács’ reading of Nietzsche does not really attain to the core of Nietzsche’s philosophy. This core is as I have tried to point out throughout this dissertation, Nietzsche’s attempt to redeem humans from revenge by removing teleology from within Becoming. Nietzsche attempts to think

through this redemption through his thought of the death of God and the eternal recurrence of the same, and his re-evaluation of Becoming and each passing moment of Becoming.

vi) Gilles Deleuze

Gilles Deleuze has provided an influential Nietzsche interpretation.¹⁹⁵ After Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and along with Müller-Lauter, Deleuze was perhaps the most interesting Continental Nietzsche commentator of the second half of the twentieth century. Deleuze has insistently polemicized with Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche. What Deleuze objects to is Heidegger's *rapprochement* between Nietzsche and Hegel. Heidegger's Hegelianization and metaphycization of Nietzsche is objectionable according to Deleuze. Deleuze has attracted attention to the fact that Nietzsche's philosophy is decidedly anti-dialectical.

For Deleuze, Nietzsche's philosophy is affirmative and rejects the negativity of the "sad" affects of suffering that characterize Hegel's dialectic. The Hegelian dialectic is propelled by suffering and this is something that is irreconcilable with Nietzsche's affirmative and playful side. Deleuze has pointed out that the fundamental difference in Nietzsche's understanding of history and morality is the difference between the active and the reactive. This distinction between the active and the reactive is already present in Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures,¹⁹⁶ but Heidegger never mentions it in relation to the moral-political categories of the master and the slave but only in terms of Nietzsche's aesthetic discussion of Romanticism and in terms of how Nietzsche sees the distinction between Being and becoming.

¹⁹⁵ Deleuze, G., *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1962.

One question that comes to mind when we read Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche is whether with respect to its metaphysical core this reading has really substantially gone beyond Heidegger's reading. This can be readily grasped when we see that Deleuze accepts the unity that Heidegger posits between will to power and eternal recurrence. Deleuze writes: "C'est pourquoi l'éternel retour doit être pensé comme une synthèse: synthèse du temps et de ses dimensions, synthèse du devenir et de l'être qui s'affirme du devenir, synthèse de la double affirmation."¹⁹⁷ This formulation is astonishingly similar to Heidegger's interpretation of the eternal recurrence. However, it is undeniable that Deleuze has "progressed" somewhat with respect to Heidegger.

First, Deleuze has managed to show that it was fruitful to read Nietzsche in conjunction with Spinoza. He has successfully challenged one of the most difficult aspects of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche : his rapprochement of Nietzsche to Hegel.

Along with Deleuze,¹⁹⁸ I believe that this continuity between Nietzsche and Hegel must ultimately be rejected. Nietzsche, despite his at times hyperbolic affirmation of will to power, does not possess a strong concept of the will. This can be seen in Nietzsche's rejection and critique of Schopenhauer's concept of the will. The concept that Nietzsche does examine thoroughly and that he has in common with German Idealism is the concept of Becoming. However Becoming is thought dialectically and teleologically in German Idealism (especially in Hegel). In the last analysis, Nietzsche goes beyond and deconstructs Idealism, rather than remaining entrenched in it, by radicalizing and thinking Becoming both un-dialectically and non-teleologically. In fact, this will perhaps be Deleuze's legacy in Nietzsche scholarship : the emphasis on the structural, non-dialectical and non-teleological aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy.

¹⁹⁶ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche I*, p.156, (*Nietzsche*, Vol. I, translation Krell, p.133).

¹⁹⁷ Deleuze, G., *op.cit.*, p.55.

An important aspect of Deleuze's reading is his identification of the problem of the critique of the initial state and final state. I have analyzed this critique extensively in section 1.3. With this problem Deleuze reconstructs Nietzsche's conception of the eternal recurrence in an entirely original way with respect to Heidegger. For Deleuze returning is the Being of Becoming. ("Revenir, l'être de tout ce qui devient"¹⁹⁸). Thus, Deleuze manages to show against Heidegger (and indirectly against Lukács and Jaspers) that the thought of eternal recurrence is not a thought that pertains to Being or to the question of Being but to Becoming. To become is to recur or return and to return or to recur is to become: this is Nietzsche's fundamental teaching of eternal recurrence of the same.

This is what my reading shares with Deleuze's above all: I believe that what recurs in the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is Becoming itself. My thesis is that what recurs is the eternal recurrence of the Becoming of the will to power. In this way we can unify the will to power and eternal recurrence through the concept of Becoming. So with Heidegger and against Müller-Lauter, I believe that Nietzsche's thought does possess a certain unity. This unity is afforded to it by the self-propelling yet contradictory movement of Becoming. Through Becoming all the major concepts of Nietzsche's philosophy can be brought together and it is my aim to show that in this thesis.

But despite its unity, Becoming is also a-diaphoristic and charismatic. It is a broken, fragmented totality and Nietzsche's dialectic is akin to the broken dialectic of Kierkegaard. Against the system, the individual invokes the broken totality and the broken dialectic. Becoming constitutes a system given in aphorisms. The Being of

¹⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, p.280, PUF, Paris, 1973.

¹⁹⁹ Deleuze, G., *op.cit.*, p.54.

Becoming is fragmented, in-complete. It is for this reason that Nietzsche cannot complete Western thought, because his philosophy is essentially non-finite, in-finite, un-closed, dis-closed and open. This openness is the openness of modernity that is an essentially in-complete project. Through his thought of infinite, non-dialectical and a-teleological Becoming, Nietzsche has definitely taken his distance from Hegel.

Deleuze is perfectly correct on this last point. But the absoluteness and eternal aspect of Becoming could perhaps be re-conciled with Hegel's understanding of Being. However as the through Heraclitean that he is, Nietzsche still favors Becoming of over Being: in this the reconciliation with Hegel remains impossible.

vii) Jürgen Habermas

Jürgen Habermas is an important philosopher of the end of the twentieth century and beginning of twenty-first century. He has written on Nietzsche in different places of his *corpus*. Habermas sees Nietzsche as the entry point into post-modernity. Modernity had been placed according to Habermas under the sign of "subjective freedom". This political freedom had metaphysical underpinnings that were furnished in part by Hegel's system of absolute Idealism. Hegel first conceived the concept of civil society and provided (by building on Kant's theory of law and rights) the right-theoretical apparatus to conceptualize the relationship between civil rights, the law and the State:

Above all the modern age stood under the sign of subjective freedom. This was realized in society as the space secured by civil law for the rational pursuit of one's own interests ; in the state, as the in principle equal rights to participation in the formation of political will ; in the private sphere, as ethical autonomy and self-realization ; finally, in the public sphere related to this private realm, as the formative process that takes place by means of the appropriation of a culture that has become reflective.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Habermas, J., *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1987,

But Nietzsche successfully criticized absolute Idealism and its dialectic of Enlightenment. By detaching the moral object from the rational object, Nietzsche totalized the critique of rationality according to Habermas. Nietzsche radicalized, through his critique of morality and metaphysics, the legitimation crisis that Habermas writes about. Habermas condemns this radicalization of the legitimation crisis as the fact that the normative content of modernity is missing. Modernity is thus at a cross-roads. For Habermas, modernity generates its normativity out of itself. But at the same time the legitimation crisis risks to jeopardize the normative posits of modernity.

The “problem” with Habermas’ interpretation of Nietzsche is that it focuses on two aspects or phases of Nietzsche’s thought: 1) In *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, Habermas focuses on the positivistic and historicistic aspects of Nietzsche’s thought. In *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas’ reading focuses almost exclusively on Nietzsche’s romantic period surrounding the publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*. Habermas’ main criticism of Nietzsche in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, is that he confuses validity claims with claims to power. In order to understand this critique by Habermas we have to examine the later writings. It is true that for Nietzsche, in the later writings, truth is connected to power. For Nietzsche, every increase in truth presupposes an increase in power. Truth is the kind of error a certain living species (the human one) cannot live without. Truth is one of the fundamental values that has lost its value in the narration Nietzsche gives of European nihilism. The cause of nihilism is according to Nietzsche the faith in the categories of reason.

Habermas believes, following Weber, that modernity is differentiated in terms of three validity domains or spheres: the aesthetic sphere, the scientific sphere and the moral

sphere. Habermas believes that he can hold these three spheres apart in order to put forth and describe his project of modernity. Habermas writes:

Nietzsche's "theory of knowledge," although formulated in aphoristic aperçus, consists in the attempt to comprehend the categorial framework of the natural sciences (space, time, event), the concept of law (causality), the operational basis of experience (measurement), and the rules of logic as the calculation as the relative *a priori* of a world of objective illusion that has been produced for the purposes of mastering nature and thus preserving existence....²⁰¹

Habermas believes that ideal speech situations contain within themselves the normative potential to resolve conflicts and come to an understanding (*sich verständigen*). Habermas' notion of truth is dialogical and consensus-based. Habermas believes, following Peirce (at least as far as *Erkenntnis und Interesse* is concerned, his position likely evolves across the habermasian *corpus*) that truth is achieved at the end of long and cumulative learning processes. Given enough time and resources two independent subjects will arrive at the same conclusion at the end of an inquiry.

In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas focuses on Nietzsche's development starting from the early texts: the *Second Untimely Meditation* and the *Birth of Tragedy*. Habermas contrasts Nietzsche's attempt to create a new myth in the figure of Dionysos with the valorisation of mythology in the *Ältestes Systemprogramm des Deutschen Idealismus*, in Schelling's *System des Transzendental Idealismus* and in the Romanticism (whose main representative Habermas takes to be Friedrich Schlegel). For Habermas all these attempts can be contrasted with Nietzsche's insofar as they attempt to *regenerate* the Western philosophical tradition's understanding of itself. This is the case because according to Habermas, Nietzsche does not want, through his philosophical attempts, to regenerate the Western philosophical tradition but rather to *dismiss* it.

²⁰¹ Habermas, J., *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, p.295.

In order to make good on this claim, Habermas has to affirm that Nietzsche gives up on the emancipatory potential of reason. Habermas summarizes Nietzsche's position in *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* as follows:

In the end he [Nietzsche, P.C.] oscillates between two strategies. On the one hand Nietzsche sees the possibility of an artistic contemplation of the world carried out with scholarly tools but in antimetaphysical, antiromantic, pessimistic, and skeptical attitude. Because it serves the philosophy of will to power, a historical science of this kind is supposed to be able to escape the illusion of belief in truth. Then of course, the validity of that philosophy would have to be presupposed. That is why Nietzsche must, on the other hand, assert the possibility of a critique of metaphysics that digs up the roots of metaphysical thought without, however, itself giving up philosophy. He proclaims Dionysus a philosopher and himself the last disciple and initiate of this god who does philosophy.²⁰²

However, Habermas' reading leaves too many things about Nietzsche's philosophy unresolved. On the one hand, Habermas does not distinguish enough between the different phases of the development of Nietzsche's thought. It is true that there is a Nietzsche that is an esthete and a romantic and who, under Wagner's influence, develops a polarity between Dionysos and Apollo. It is also true that bit by bit, Nietzsche maintains and radicalizes the importance of the figure of Dionysos arriving at what we could call a Dionysian "monism" which comes to replace the Dionysos-Apollo dialectic that was prevalent in the *Birth of Tragedy*. But the idea that Nietzsche dismisses altogether the Western project known as modernity in order to replace it by a precocious post-modernism is far too polemical. This claim, that Nietzsche can be read as the inaugurator of post-modernism, a claim shared by Nehamas and Derrida, has been taken to task in recent Anglo-American scholarship.²⁰³

²⁰² *Ibidem*, p.97.

²⁰³ See Brian Leiter, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Morality*, Routledge, London, 2002, Chapter 1, Nietzsche, Naturalist or Post-Modernist.

Traditional Nietzsche scholarship distinguishes between the early phase of Nietzsche's philosophy (all of Nietzsche's writings up to *Human, All-Too-Human*), a middle phase (all of the writings starting from *Human, All-Too-Human* and up to the *Gay Science*) and a late phase (all the writings including and following the publication of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). This distinction cannot be taken to be too rigid but should be considered as a heuristic. The distinction is not taken along strictly temporal lines (i.e. according to the dates of publication of Nietzsche's works) but according to a thematic distinction. In the first phase of his thought, Nietzsche is taken to be a romantic and metaphysical esthete. In the second phase of his thought, Nietzsche is taken to be an *Aufklärer* and a positivist (and Habermas subscribes to this interpretation at least in part in *Erkenntnis und Interesse*). In the third phase of his thought, Nietzsche is interpreted ambiguously as construing a metaphysics of will to power (Heidegger) thus regressing in a certain way to the first phase of his thought, or as completely renouncing metaphysical truth as correspondence.²⁰⁴

I believe that Nietzsche both gives up on metaphysical correspondence and that he does construe something like a metaphysics although this metaphysics is not one of the will to power but is a metaphysics of Becoming and of Being-interpreted. However, it is clear that Habermas' interpretation has not done justice to the differentiated aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. The artist's metaphysics does attempt to create a new myth in the figure of Dionysos, and it is perhaps the case that Nietzsche believes in metaphysical truth as early as the "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense", but it is likely that Nietzsche gives up this merely aesthetic position in his second and third phase.

²⁰⁴Clark, M., *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. See Section 4, in Chapter 6: *The Ascetic Ideal*, Cambridge, England, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

As to the emancipatory potential of Nietzsche's philosophy it is true that this potential is not construed in terms of the validity claims of a modernity rationally differentiated into Weber's three value spheres. But through his de-transcendentalization of the world of metaphysics, Nietzsche does operate an emancipation of the world of Becoming. This emancipation it is true is not done according to the principle of subjectivity discovered and described by Hegel, but through a radicalization of this subjectivity principle. This radicalization is one of the aspects that Heidegger is right about in his Nietzsche interpretation.

I do not agree with Heidegger's reading however when, by claiming that Nietzsche radicalizes the subjectivity principle present in Hegel's philosophy, he goes further, essentializes will to power and reduces it to the absolute subjectivity of German Idealism. Nietzsche radicalizes the subjectivity principle and at once dismisses it and takes his distance from it. But this is not done through a support of and a cleansing of a modern aesthetic conscience that is purified of any theoretical and practical connection to reason. Nietzsche's aestheticism is represented by the claim that: "existence is justified only aesthetically." But this does not mean that Nietzsche is a supporter of *l'art pour l'art*. His aestheticism could be understood in the light of the romantic estheticism of Schlegel who writes that "The world is a work of art that constantly gives birth to itself."

Habermas erroneously claims that Nietzsche was a supporter of *l'art pour l'art*. This is plain false as the following quotes testify.²⁰⁵ It is true that Nietzsche's appreciation of *l'art pour l'art* was ambivalent insofar as Nietzsche admired Baudelaire who can be taken to be one of the main representatives of that movement (following the reading of an essay by Paul Bourget).

²⁰⁵ *JGB*, 208 (*KSA* 5, pp.138-139). *JGB*, 254 (*KSA* 5, pp.198-199), 24, (*KSA* 6, pp.127-128), *KSA* 11, 26 [352] *KSA* 12, 7 [10]. *KSA* 12, 9 [126], *KSA* 13, 14 [120].

Nietzsche has provided tools for criticizing modernity as his genealogical project testifies. It is perhaps the case that this project cannot evade the logical paradoxes of self-reference. But this argument against self-reference is undone by its own formality.

Nietzsche did not think very highly of formal (and formal-pragmatic extensions of) logic and its inherent limitations and he provides an immanent critique of this formal logic.

It is a fact that genealogy can be used locally as a tool to criticize modern, economic, political and religious institutions. Habermas is right that genealogy cannot provide a total or global critique of modernity but it is not clear that this was Nietzsche's intention. It does seem that it is Habermas who is in fact totalizing the aspirations of modern reason by claiming that a total reconstruction of modernity can be achieved and detached from its historical roots through the universality of a theory of communicative action and through the universal justification of discourse ethics.

In reading Nietzsche and Habermas on Nietzsche, one has to distinguish between redemption and emancipation. Heidegger claims in *Was heisst Denken* that it is Nietzsche's goal to redeem humans from metaphysical revenge. This redemption of man from revenge that is also alluded to by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, should be understood as a condition for emancipation. It is only if humanity is redeemed that it can also be emancipated. One can thus see that Habermas mis-interprets Nietzsche's philosophy when he claims that Nietzsche wants to merely *dismiss* the Western philosophical project known as metaphysical rationality.

If Heidegger is right (and I believe that he is) that Nietzsche wants to redeem humans from metaphysical revenge, then this redemption could prove to be the source of a *regeneration* (which could in turn lead to an emancipation of man by man) of the origins of the Western philosophical project known as metaphysical rationality. This aspect is completely missed by Habermas in his interpretation of Nietzsche.

In order to connect Habermas' reading of Nietzsche to the concept of Becoming that is the theme of my dissertation, I would like to add that Habermas' thesis that Nietzsche totalizes reason is not well-founded. If one takes reason to be grounded in Becoming that is in perpetual transformation and change, then one has to grant that the ground is not a totality but that it is both totality and fragment. Here Habermas has perhaps understood the implications of reading Nietzsche with Schlegel but he polemicizes too much against this Nietzschean Romanticism.

It can be shown that the absolute, eternal and infinite aspects of Becoming are precisely those elements which ground modern rationality and which make for the fact that modernity is an un-finished project. The infinity, un-determinacy and openness of modernity is precisely what is grounded in Nietzsche's eternal, absolute, infinite and universal Becoming. In this sense, Nietzsche is both the last of the great Romantics and the deepest ironical modernist. He has provided the post-modernists with their concepts of linguistic representationalism, but through the richness and depth of his thought of Becoming he has also shown a way out of the "Sackgasse" of post-modernity.

viii) Wolfgang Müller-Lauter

Wolfgang Müller-Lauter has provided a very strong interpretation of Nietzsche.²⁰⁶ Working for a long time as the editor of Nietzsche-Studien, Müller-Lauter has carried on the tradition of great Nietzsche interpretation in Germany in the footsteps of such people as Heidegger, Jaspers, Löwith and Fink. In fact, Müller-Lauter efficiently argues with Heidegger just as Deleuze does, but Müller-Lauter's critique is stated differently.

²⁰⁶ Müller-Lauter, W., *Nietzsche, His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, De Gruyter, Berlin and New York, 1999, *Über Werden und Wille zur Macht* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 1999), *Über Freiheit und Chaos* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 1999), *Heidegger-Nietzsche* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 2001).

Müller-Lauter writes:

Heidegger attributes a special significance to Nietzsche's philosophy within the history of metaphysics. He interprets Nietzsche's philosophy as the *completion* of Western philosophy, insofar as the *inversion* of metaphysics performed in it supposedly exhausts its essential possibilities. But even more occurs in Nietzsche's thinking: the *destruction* of metaphysics by its own resources. It can be shown that Nietzsche's philosophy precisely as the highest peak of the "metaphysics of subjectivity" this subjectivity plunges in the bottomless pit. The metaphysical "will to the will", in the form of will to power that sees itself as itself, becomes *willed* will that no longer refers back to *one* willing entity, a single will, but rather merely to the *complex* of willing that interrogates itself concerning its ultimate actual givenness and withdraws into the undeterminable.²⁰⁷

Müller-Lauter is still influenced by Heidegger insofar as he claims that: "For example, the repeated allegation that the theory of will to power, or that of the overman, is incompatible with eternal recurrence will be shown to be merely apparent..." As I have stated in section 2.1 Critique of Heidegger's Nietzsche Interpretation, Heidegger has argued for the essential unity of the thoughts of the eternal recurrence and will to power. Thus, it would seem that Müller-Lauter has not really advanced, from this perspective at least, beyond Heidegger.

According to Müller-Lauter,²⁰⁸ Heidegger essentializes Nietzsche's thought of will to power. In his opinion there are only wills to power in the plural. Müller-Lauter's reading is very interesting and along with Gilles Deleuze he has perhaps provided the most important critiques to Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche.

The Deleuzian and Müller-Lauterian readings are characterized by different interpretations of will to power. Heidegger sees in will to power the culmination of

²⁰⁷ Nietzsche, *His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, Berlin, New York, University of Illinois Press, 1999, p.122.

²⁰⁸ In Nietzsche, *His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, Berlin, New York, University of Illinois Press, 1999.

metaphysical rationality. This culmination happens in two different ways: on the one side from Plato and on the other side from Hegel.

Müller-Lauter's position is that in Nietzsche the metaphysical will-to-will sees itself and posits itself as a total will, but that at the same time this will is referred to a multiplicity of wills to power that decenter will to power as a purely metaphysical principle. Thus, metaphysics destroys itself from within metaphysics in Nietzsche's thought, according to Müller-Lauter. Müller-Lauter did not rule out that Nietzsche's philosophy is metaphysical as some might think. He points out that Nietzsche and Heidegger have different understandings of "metaphysics". For Nietzsche, metaphysics is ultimately related to the two-world conception, to the dualism that is inherited from Plato between the Ideas and the particulars. For Heidegger, however, metaphysics is related to the question of Being. Nietzsche's philosophy is metaphysical, according to Heidegger, because it asks the question of Being and it posits Being as will to power. It is with this construal of Nietzsche's philosophy that Müller-Lauter has a problem: for him the will to power cannot be essentialized into Being and into a metaphysical principle that somehow transcends the contexts in which it is given.

But this thesis does not take into account what makes Heidegger's reading so interesting : the idea of a continuity in the history of metaphysics from Hegel to Nietzsche: the inversion of absolute subjectivity (Hegel) into the consummate subjectivity of will to power (Nietzsche). An additional aspect of Heidegger's Nietzsche reading is the continuity established from Plato to Nietzsche.

What Müller-Lauter has shown, contra Heidegger, is that there is no unity of Nietzsche's thought. The will to power is not a metaphysical principle as Heidegger tries to argue but a play of multiple force-centers, power-centers, power-wills and will-punctuations. This multiplicity and plurality of Nietzsche's thought has not received a

just treatment in Heidegger's intent to reduce the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same to a unity.

According to Nietzsche, Becoming and the Whole that is constituted by Being and Becoming is radically plural, fragmented, inconsistent and even in-coherent. The Whole that returns, recurs as fragment and as *a-diaphory* and *chorismos*. This radical indeterminateness of Nietzsche's thought has been identified by Müller-Lauter, following Jasper's great reading of Nietzsche. By contrast, Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche continually tries to determine, to fix and de-limit Nietzsche's thought. This essential delimitation occurs when Heidegger attempts to claim that Nietzsche *completes* the Western metaphysical tradition. Heidegger further determines and over-determines Nietzsche's thought when he claims that it can be sub-sumed and totalized under the principle of the unity of the will to power.

But if, following Müller-Lauter, we admit that there are wills-to-power and multiple contradictions in Nietzsche's thought, then we have to reject the idea of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician of the West. Instead, we have to conceive this move by Heidegger as a rhetorical move that allows him to de-limit and to fix Nietzsche's position on Becoming. However, Nietzsche's thought on Becoming, at the same time as it is *a-diaphoristic* and *chorismatic*, evolving at the limits of coherence and in-coherence, also focuses on the infinite, absolute and eternal aspects of Becoming.

It is perhaps these aspects which Müller-Lauter has somewhat neglected since he claims that any "givenness" pre-supposes the stability and persistence of self-consciousness. Here, Müller-Lauter has perhaps missed an essential aspect of Nietzsche's analysis of consciousness in terms of drives and will to power. There is only stability and permanence because we pre-suppose this stability and permanence in our consciousness and then "project" it onto the outside world, then moving back and inferring inner

stability and permanence from the stability and permanence of the outside world. This circle or self-contradiction of consciousness is something that Müller-Lauter seems to miss in his deep and thorough reading of Nietzsche.

The inconsistency and in-coherence of Becoming is thus a result of the inconsistency and in-coherence of the human ego or conscience which is perpetually in movement, attempting to “seize” and “grasp” itself in the movement and passage of each time-instant. Each instant that passes transforms our conscience and we try to grasp both ourselves and the surrounding world in an essential yet un-seizable identity that continually vanishes and disappears. This flow of Becoming that is identical to the flow of our conscience is ultimately un-fathomable despite the appearance of consistency, unity, stability and permanence that first appear to be given to it

The inconsistency and un-reality of Becoming can thus be understood in the contradictory and self-contradictory relationship that Becoming has towards both Being and the human conscience, ego or psyche. Becoming is contradictory in its perpetual self-effacement and going-under. The thought of Becoming is the thought of a broken, un-articulated and in-coherent totality. What returns in the eternal recurrence is the Becoming of force-points, power-points, power-wills and will-punctuations of the will to power. Ultimately, taken to their limit, these points and punctuations have no tangible, material reality. They exist as fictions and falsifications of the supreme will to power that is effectuated starting from both our senses and our spirit, to use Nietzsche’s language.

Müller-Lauter has brought to light both the physicalism (Lange, Fechner, Büchner) and the vitalism (Wilhelm Roux, Virchow) of Nietzsche’s philosophy of Becoming. In this, he has done a great service to Nietzsche scholarship. He has perhaps missed the more ironic, *a-diaphoristic* and *chorismatic* aspects of Becoming in Nietzsche’s philosophy.

It is these aspects that tie Nietzsche to the ironic and infinite Romanticism of Schlegel, Tieck and Novalis. This is especially apparent in the early writings that are influenced by Schopenhauer and Heraclitus. There, Nietzsche emphasizes the infinite, absolute and eternal aspects of Becoming. It is difficult to reconcile these aspects with the in-consistent, contradictory, fragmented, non-totalizable, non-articulated and in-coherent aspects of the concepts of Becoming which Nietzsche has also emphasized. How can something (Becoming) be both infinite, absolute, eternal and in-consistent, contradictory and ultimately, in-coherent ? This contradiction in Nietzsche's thought may ultimately never be resolved, but it is also what gives his thought, its lasting, enduring and self-perpetuating power.

x) Gianni Vattimo

Gianni Vattimo introduces an innovative reading of Nietzsche in his 1974, *Il soggetto et la maschera*. Vattimo's reading is characterized by an emphasis on the concept of the *Übermensch*. There are certain ideological reasons for Vattimo's inclination towards Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*. Vattimo is interested in doing a synthesis of Nietzsche and Marx and he is very critical of Lukács' reception of Nietzsche in *Destruction of Reason*. But what is perhaps most original in Vattimo's reading of Nietzsche, in *Il soggetto et la maschera* at least, is his identification of a Nietzschean classicism. By contrasting Nietzsche's understanding of Being and appearance with Hegel's dialectical conception of both these concepts, Vattimo throws a new light on the relationship between Hegel and Nietzsche. Vattimo claims that Nietzsche does not fully emancipate himself from Hegel's phenomenologico-dialectical understanding of history until *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. It is only with the combined teachings of the *Übermensch*

and the eternal recurrence of the same, that a break is achieved from the recuperative reading of history that is so characteristic of Hegel's philosophical system.

In his most recent book on Nietzsche, *Dialogue with Nietzsche*, Vattimo makes an interesting remark about Lukács' reading of Nietzsche. I cite this remark because it is pertinent to the debate whether Nietzsche should be interpreted as a philosopher having a *political* philosophy. Vattimo writes: "Second, unlike other interpreters who are careful to stay within purely philosophical and theoretical bounds, Lukács takes seriously Nietzsche's (not in the least "literary") claim to be the prophet of a humanity that is meant to be realized historically, hence to forge new social relations and new political structures [...]."²⁰⁹ It seems that Vattimo agrees with this claim by Lukács that Nietzsche wanted also to "forge new social relations and new political structures". I am also in agreement with Vattimo's thesis: Nietzsche cannot be read as a pure metaphysician and theologian. There are political implications to Nietzsche's philosophy. But Nietzsche raises the important question of whether the political or the metaphysical aspects of philosophy have priority.

According to me, Vattimo's most important contribution in *Il soggetto e la maschera* consists in bringing to light a Nietzsche that is both, somehow a classicist and a Romantic in his conflict with modern civilization. Nietzsche's problem with modernity consists in its absence of balance between form and content. Comparing modernity to the Classical Greeks, Nietzsche bemoans the absence of stylistic coherence between inside and outside, between form and content.

But Nietzsche's classicism is inherently different from that of Winckelmann as is correctly pointed out by Vattimo. For Nietzsche it is the tragic, romantic aspects of

²⁰⁹ Vattimo, G., *Dialogue with Nietzsche*, New York. Columbia University Press, 2006.

Greece that we can learn from as moderns. The irrational stratum that exists under the formal Apollonian aspects of Greek civilization are what Nietzsche is interested in.

For Nietzsche, the Apollonian *is* but the Dionysian *Becomes*. By connecting the myth of Dionysos with the philosophies of Heraclitus and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche intends to do justice to the irrationality and incoherence of Becoming. This does not mean as I have argued in the section on Habermas, that Nietzsche wishes to dismiss the Western philosophical tradition. One can look at his un-masking (in Vattimo's and Foucault's sense) of reason as a prelude to a deeper grounding of reason. Becoming is both *adiaphoristic* and *chorismatic*. It is inconsistent, finite and incoherent. But it also contains within itself the infinite, eternal and absolute potential of human reason. It is by un-earthing the roots of modernity as grounded in an eternal and infinite Becoming that Nietzsche attempted to re-generate and redeem humanity and the Western ideal of human rationality.

xi) Günter Abel

Abel's reading of Nietzsche is both powerful and influential. His position has been characterized by critics such as Hofman as that of interpretationist. This position should not be confused with that of philosophical hermeneutics to which Abel's position is critically and polemically opposed.

Abel has a sophisticated theory of interpretation. He distinguishes between the famous hermeneutical circle and a circle of interpretation (*Zirkel der Interpretation*). The circle of interpretation allows a "rapprochement" between Nietzsche and Hegel. This is the case because the circle of interpretation is related to the "logicality" that is presupposed by any interpretative activity. Abel is quick to make the precision that this

logicality is not a formal one and that it is, in Nietzsche's thought, the general logicality of life. Abel also mentions that Nietzsche's critique of logic has only focused on the formal aspects of logic and has not taken into account the "logic" of interpretation that fundamentally destroys and overcomes any form of metaphysical rationality.

An important aspect of Abel's reading of Nietzsche is his treatment of the concept of eternal recurrence. Abel manages to show that even though eternal recurrence is not a purely scientific doctrine (rather he claims that it is a pre-logical doctrine that is presupposed by all scientific thought), the scientific advances of twentieth-century science do not contradict and have not rendered obsolete the thought of recurrence.

Referring to modern astrophysical theory, relativity theory and particle theory, Abel shows that there are concepts in these theories that support the doctrine of eternal recurrence. This allows Abel to increase the legitimacy of recurrence that depended previously and according to Nietzsche's own self-understanding, on the basic laws of thermo-dynamics.

In clarifying the concept of eternal recurrence, Abel has to explain how he understands the concept of Becoming. For Abel, it is clear that Becoming must be understood in terms of the mature concepts of power and force-centers that dynamically interact to create increases and disgregations of power. This allows Abel to claim that Nietzsche's philosophy in general and his understanding of Becoming and eternal recurrence in particular is "relativistic". Here a terminological ambiguity must be avoided: "relativism" in terms of Einstein's theory of relativity must be distinguished from the problem of philosophical relativism that is as old as Protagoras and the Sophistical school. This ambiguity is not totally dispelled in Abel's own usage of the term "relativism" and this is a possible criticism that may be inveighed against him.

Abel's great achievement is to have clarified and re-defined the relationship between facticity and interpretativity (*Interpretativität*) in Nietzsche's thought. In this sense, Abel writes the following:

In diesem Sinne ist von dem vollständigen Ineinanderstehen von Faktizität und Interpretation auszugehen. Vom Interpretations-Zirkel gilt, dass aus ihm und in ihm alles, was ist, wird. Er selbst aber hat weder einen Anfang noch ein Ende, gar ein Endziel. Es gibt in ihm kein Erstes und kein Letztes, keine Teleologie oder Entelechie [...]²¹⁰

Abel's position is an extremely interesting one. He follows the author of *Lange and Nietzsche*²¹¹ (George J. Stack) insofar as he understands Nietzsche to overcome both mechanism and atomism. Abel recognizes that under the influence of Boscovich, Nietzsche attains a form of dynamic power and force-relativism. In claiming that the thought of eternal recurrence is the interpretation of interpretations, Abel attempts to overcome Müller-Lauter's position who had claimed that Nietzsche's philosophy was an interpretation of interpreting (*eine Interpretation des interpretierens*).

I will make mine the critique that Müller-Lauter has made against Abel in *Über Freiheit und Chaos*.²¹² Müller-Lauter claims that Abel tries to bring to the fore the logical aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy too much. In so doing, Abel over-interprets the relationship between Nietzsche and Hegel and brings them into a closeness that the texts do not warrant. Furthermore, for Müller-Lauter, by developing the relationship between facticity and interpretativity, Abel does not focus enough on the difference between perspectivity and interpretativity (a fault that Alexander Nehamas is also guilty of as I claim in the next sub-section of this chapter). By melting, facticity, perspectivity and

²¹⁰ Abel, G., Nietzsche, *Die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht und die ewige Wiederkehr*, p.173, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1984.

²¹¹ Stack, G. J., Lange and Nietzsche, pp.224-261, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1983.

²¹² Müller-Lauter, W., pp.269- 309, *Nietzsches Wiederkunftsgedanke in Gunter Abels Philosophie der Interpretation, Freiheit und Chaos*, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1999.

interpretativity into one, Abel forsakes a certain rational potential that is still available to these concepts even if this is not directly extractable from Nietzsche's philosophy.

xii) Johann Figl

Figl was the first to propose a Nietzsche interpretation that would take interpretation seriously in his thought and that could eventually retrieve him for the project of philosophical hermeneutics. Figl follows Müller-Lauter's lead in claiming that the will to power is a plurality and not a unity. By referring to Fink's Nietzsche interpretation, Figl claims that Nietzsche interprets Being as Becoming and thus overcomes the *chorismos* that the Western metaphysical tradition attributed to Being and Becoming. Figl attracts attention to *Will to Power* 617 (*KSA* 12, 7 [54]) in which the "stamping (*Prägung*) of the character of Being onto Becoming" is mentioned. That the stamping is a falsification means that Being cannot be seen as fundamental with respect to Becoming. Being is only one aspect of Becoming: the linguistic and conceptual aspect that allows for predication.

Hofmann (to whom I refer in the next entry in this section) has claimed that "Figl will am 'Wahrheitszusammenhang zwischen Zeichen und Sache' festhalten, wo Nietzsches Bestrebungen ganz darauf gerichtet sind, einen solchen Zusammenhang aufzulösen und zu verflüssigen..."²¹³ It is perhaps this attempt by Nietzsche to dissolve the relationship between sign and thing (*Sache*) that makes it difficult to retrieve him for the project of philosophical hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics, in my understanding of this concept, attempts to re-attach and re-connect the lived and spoken contexts of the thing with the symbolical abstraction of the

²¹³ Hofmann, J., *Wahrheit, Perspektive, Interpretation, Nietzsche und die philosophische Hermeneutik*,

sign. If Hofmann, is right, in his assessment of the way Nietzsche sees the relationship between sign and thing, then Nietzsche cannot be retrieved as an advocate of philosophical hermeneutics. The dissolving of the relation between sign and thing makes sense from the point of view of a philosophy of Becoming that wants to re-activate the lived and instinctive elements of the activity of philosophical interpretation.

This problem of the relationship of the concept of Becoming to the project of a philosophical hermeneutics is important. Philosophical hermeneutics, following Heidegger's lead in the twentieth century believed that Being and eternity are derived from a finite temporality of Dasein. The hermeneutics of factual life consisted in the interpretation of the facticity of Dasein that rejected the concept of Being as absolute, ahistorical and eternal.

But we have seen that following my interpretation of Becoming, Nietzsche seemed to want to restore some of the attributes that the tradition had ascribed to Being to Becoming. We were thus faced with the paradox of having a concept of Becoming, which was traditionally associated to time and change, that could suffer the attributes of eternity, absoluteness and infinitude.

Furthermore, what makes problematic the tacking of Nietzsche onto any project of philosophical hermeneutics is the problem that is so central to that tradition of thought of meaning, totality and coherence. For Nietzsche, Becoming is both absolute and finite, coherent and in-coherent. Becoming is both totality and fragment. The best way to characterize it is to claim that it is in-determinate (*adiaphoristic*) and broken apart (*chorismatic*). For these reasons Nietzsche's philosophy of Becoming stands at irreconcilable odds with the project of philosophical hermeneutics.

xiii) Johann Nepomuk Hofmann

Hofmann takes Nietzsche into consideration with relation to the problem of philosophical hermeneutics. He asks the question: why has Nietzsche been so neglected in the project of twentieth-century philosophical hermeneutics. For Hofmann, the future of hermeneutics as a philosophical movement depends on understanding the critical challenge that Nietzsche poses to philosophical hermeneutics. It is clear that Hofmann wants to pull Nietzsche within the orb of the hermeneutical movement. In this sense he polemically charges against Lukács that Nietzsche does not destroy reason but that he inaugurates another type of interpretative (*interpretatorische*) reason. This whole debate over the status of interpretation has been the rage in more recent Nietzsche studies. Günther Abel himself claims that the thought of eternal recurrence is the interpretation of interpretations (*Interpretation der Interpretationen*) and in this sense he wants to go beyond Müller-Lauter who claims that Nietzsche's philosophy amounts to an interpretation of interpreting (*Interpretation des interpretierens*).

The claim that Nietzsche is a philosopher of reason is difficult to sustain. There are many passages in his work that polemicize with the concept of reason. However, the opposite claim that Nietzsche is a philosopher of un-reason has perhaps also reached a certain point of conceptual exhaustion. The model of Nietzsche as a philosopher of post-modernity (an entry-point as Habermas describes him) has been effectively criticized on both sides of the Atlantic. The question is, where does this leaves us. Do we have to decide between a hermeneut Nietzsche as Hofmann and Figl try to argue or a "naturalistic" Nietzsche as Clark, Leiter and Richardson argue in North-America. Nietzsche does not seem to fit any of these categories readily. As a phoenix, Nietzsche

appears to come to life again from his ashes, in multiple, polymorphic figures that miraculously seem to fit the critical mood of the day.

Nietzsche is clearly un-recoverable for the project of philosophical hermeneutics. This is the case because of how he sees truth. Nietzsche is opposed to any form of truth as correspondence whether this correspondence is a metaphysical one or a common-sense one. There is no correspondence and hence the historical and linguistic horizons cannot elevate truth-claims that can be redeemed in the present. History and the tradition do not serve life. They are inimical to it. Nietzsche's ideal of self-creation and of *Hinlegung* of meaning is at irreconcilable odds with the hermeneutical *Auslegung des Sinns*.

xiv) Volker Gerhardt

Gerhardt has produced many impressive books on Nietzsche.²¹⁴ In a sense Gerhardt is opposed to some of the strongest readings that have been produced after Heidegger, including those of Müller-Lauter and Günter Abel and George Stack. What is at stake is the interpretation of the concept of the will to power. For Heidegger, the will to power had represented the Being of beings. Insofar as it was a unified essence, the will to power functioned as metaphysical principle for Heidegger.

But then, Müller-Lauter discovered that there were "wills" to power. The plurality of the wills to power, de-ontologized Heidegger's strong but ultimately essentialist reading of the will to power. Abel and Stack showed that the world of the will to power was a "force-point world". By paying close attention to the *Nachlass*, they showed the influence of Boscovich on Nietzsche and the way Nietzsche reacted to the physical and cosmological theories of his time.

²¹⁴ Gerhardt, V., *Vom Willen zur Macht, Anthropologie und Metaphysik der Macht am exemplarischen Fall*

This “physicalist” anti-metaphysical Nietzsche did not believe in unities but only in organizational multiplicities (*Vielheiten*). These continental interpreters connected (this is especially clear in Abel’s case) the Nietzschean “physicalism” to a theory of perspectivism and interpretation. This in turn gave them credibility and gained them some leverage with respect to Heidegger’s reading that does not really account in a strong way for Nietzsche’s perspectivism.²¹⁵

In a way, Gerhardt is opposed to these readings. Employing the concepts of mediation (*Vermittlung*) and purpose (*Zweck*), he claims that Nietzsche was attempting to attain to unities (*Einheiten*) in Becoming. He also believes that power and will to power act as ontological and epistemological principles although he believes that they do not establish a Nietzschean foundationalism.

Gerhardt’s reading is interesting but I think that he is fundamentally wrong on some counts. First, the claim that power is somehow mediated in Nietzsche just does not stand the scrutiny of the texts. It is a blatant Hegelianization of Nietzsche and this also in a way is a regression onto Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche. Second, I believe that Gerhardt confuses the epistemic, ontological and political levels of discourse in Nietzsche. It is clear that Nietzsche was not opposed to unities in all senses and applications of the concept. In fact, Nietzsche admired Napoleon because of his ability to act as a political unity that could yoke the contradictions of France (and even Europe for a while) under his rule.

But in metaphysics and epistemology, Nietzsche did not believe in unities but only in multiplicities of configurations of power: he believed in force-centers, power-

Friederich Nietzsches, de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1996.

²¹⁵ Heidegger does deal with the concept of perspective but only to en-circle and subsume it under the concept of horizon. See *Der Wille zur Macht als Erkenntnis, Nietzsche I*. Through the concept of horizon that will be appropriated by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, Heidegger essentializes Nietzsche’s radically multiple concept of perspective.

centers and power-wills and in the chaos of their interactions. I believe that many interpreters confuse the political, metaphysical and epistemological levels of discourse.

xv) Didier Franck

Franck is an important interpreter of Nietzsche's thought in France. His *Nietzsche et l'ombre de Dieu*²¹⁶ is an original interpretation of Nietzsche. Starting from an analysis of Luther and Heidegger, Franck attempts to interpret Nietzsche's *Auseinandersetzung* with Christianity by working through St-Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of the bodies. The concept of justice plays a key role in Franck's interpretation. Franck is influenced by Heidegger's interpretation of truth as justice and by Heidegger's claim that Nietzsche romanizes *aletheia* into *veritas* and thus makes possible the completion of metaphysics.

Although, I find Franck's work fascinating and erudite (especially with respect to the founding texts of the Judeo-Christian tradition), I find that he focuses too much on the theological aspects of Nietzsche's thought. Franck claims that :

Si la resurrection des corps et la justice de Dieu constituent le fondement de la Révélation et que l'être, la logique, la connaissance et la technique reposent sur des valeurs réactives auxquelles la moralité judéo-chrétienne a donné leur plus haute expression, alors seule une 'transvaluation' des valeurs sacerdotales, ordonnée à une nouvelle justice, donnant lieu à la creation d'un corps actif et supérieur, permettra de soustraire la philosophie à toute forme de théologie, c'est-à-dire de réduire le nihilisme.²¹⁷

However despite this claim, Franck consistently interprets eternal recurrence theologically by recurring first to Luther and then to Paul.

Furthermore, under the influence of Heidegger, Franck also takes *Will to Power* 617 (KSA 12, 7 [54]) to mean that "...penser la volonté de puissance comme éternel

²¹⁶ Franck, D., *Nietzsche et l'ombre de Dieu*, PUF, Paris, 1998.

²¹⁷ Idem, backcover note.

retour signifie assurer au devenir la constance de l'être."²¹⁸ For Nietzsche the highest will to power stamps the character of Being onto Becoming but it creates through this stamping a falsification, a fictionalization of Being. Being is a fiction, a superstratum added on top of the perspectives of Becoming. Permanence and permanent presence as the metaphysical ground of Being are already undone by Nietzsche even though he does not attain to the thinking that thinks Being in terms of the horizon of time.

²¹⁸ Ibidem, p.39.

b) The Anglo-American Interpretations of Nietzsche

i) Arthur C. Danto

Arthur Danto presented an early (1957) interpretation of Nietzsche in Anglo-American scholarship. His thesis is that Nietzsche anticipates through his linguistic analyses the project of Logical Positivism. For Danto, the fact that Nietzsche was skeptical with respect to truth and that he thought that the only true propositions were the ones that could be derived from the senses and the ones that possessed “significance”, brings him into the proximity of Logical Positivism. What Danto, in fact, claims is that Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysics is what he has in common with the project of Logical Positivism.

In a re-worked version that also appears at the end of his initially published book (*Nietzsche as Philosopher*), Danto claims the title of semantic nihilist for Nietzsche. If Wittgenstein is a semantic realist, one who believes (in his early position in the *Tractatus*) in the adequation of facts and linguistic propositions, Nietzsche’s position is radically opposed to the correspondence (or adequation) theory of truth. Danto’s claim that Nietzsche does not support the correspondence theory of truth has been taken to task by Maudemarie Clark and John Richardson.

I think that Danto’s position with respect to the correspondence theory is correct. I will not rehearse here the argument that I have provided elsewhere in my thesis. (See section 3.4) However, I disagree with Danto’s claim that Nietzsche’s project is close to the project of Logical Positivism. Danto has brought out interesting parallels to be sure. But I favour a reading that makes more of the metaphysical aspects of Nietzsche. Although I have attempted to criticize Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche as much as

seemed appropriate, I still think that he has shown that Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics is ambiguous and that it also reveals him as a great metaphysical thinker.

ii) Richard Schacht

Schacht has developed an interesting reading of Nietzsche that attempts to translate Nietzsche in the philosophical language of empiricism and Logical Positivism. In this sense, he follows Danto's lead, and takes Wittgenstein to be the model (although Schacht compares Nietzsche to the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* and not of the *Tractatus*) that can be retroactively applied to Nietzsche in order to understand him.

Schacht relates the problem of the correspondence theory of truth to the issue of Becoming that is so central to my thesis in the following way:

Nietzsche further holds the correspondence theory of truth (as traditionally understood) to be wanting in that, on his view, it cannot be the case, that the 'truth' of any such propositions-and indeed of any propositions at all-is a matter of their standing in a correspondence-relation to a reality that has an intrinsic structural articulation and ordering, since there is no such reality for propositions to correspond to. The world as he conceives it, has the character of 'becoming' rather than being of 'flux' rather than 'structure'...²¹⁹

By distinguishing between three levels of truth, however, Schacht hopes to show that Nietzsche's theory of truth is more complex than it apparently seems. Ultimately, Schacht believes that there is a correspondence theory at play in Nietzsche's thought. This correspondence occurs within the linguistic games and life-forms within which something is asserted of a state of affairs. Although this conceptual language is that of Wittgenstein and not Nietzsche, Schacht hopes to show that there is a foreground

²¹⁹ Schacht, R., *Nietzsche*, pp.61-62, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne, Henley, 1983.

correspondence theory operating in Nietzsche's thought and that this is combined with a background coherence theory of truth.

I do not believe that by lodging the correspondence theory of truth within the linguistic games that we practice and the forms of life that we are, that we can escape the claim that Becoming conditions knowledge and truth. The forms of life and the linguistic games that we practice are themselves subject to the law of Becoming. There is no fixity according to Nietzsche not even a relative one: it has been my position throughout this thesis that because teleology is removed from withing Becoming, this dislodges fixity and ultimately impacts the epistemology of correspondence theories of truth. Thus I am forced to disagree with Schacht on the issue of how he sees truth in Nietzsche.

iii) Alexander Nehamas

Nehamas wrote perhaps the most famous Nietzsche book in Anglo-American Nietzsche scholarship of the 1980's. Under the influence of interpreters such as Derrida and Kofman, Nehamas decides to focus on the stylistic and literary aspects of Nietzsche's philosophical writings. Nehamas' Nietzsche reading functions as a paradigm of the post-modern readings that have come under criticism through the more recent evolution of Anglo-American scholarship which tries to push the idea of a naturalist Nietzsche.

Interestingly, Nehamas' reading also focuses on a central doctrine of Nietzsche's, that of perspectivism, that is still of interest for the more recent Anglo-American readings of Richardson, Leiter and Clark. The most important aspect of Nehamas' reading is his defense of Nietzschean perspectivism. It must be said, to begin with, that Nehamas does not differentiate enough between the concepts of interpretation and perspective. This allows him to claim that Nietzsche's perspectivism is defensible even though Nietzsche

claims that his perspectivism is only one perspective (or interpretation, here again Nehamas' lack of precision re-occurs) among many.

Nehamas claims, rightly I believe, that Nietzsche's philosophy of perspectivism is plagued or might be seen to be plagued by the paradoxes of self-referentiality. He affirms that the claim that P, where P, stands for Nietzsche's claim is all truth is only an interpretation could be taken to be a variation of the liar's paradox. If P means that all truth is only an interpretation and if P is true then this would mean that P also is also only an interpretation and it would undermine the truth-value of P. But, claims Nehamas, this pre-supposes that P is necessarily and always false and not that it *could* be false.

This is an interesting argument in itself and it has made Nietzsche's argument about perspectivism more palatable, but I believe that it stems from a logical fallacy. It rests on the fallacy or inconsistency that pre-supposes that interpretations could be attributed truth-values such as "true" or "false". Certainly the claim "All truths are interpretations" has a truth-value if it is taken to be a well-formed statement, but this does not mean that all interpretations take the form of well-formed statements and hence that all interpretations can be attributed the value "true" or "false". Consequently, the claim "All truths are interpretations" if it is taken to claim that all well-formed statements with the truth value "true" are interpretations does undermine and contradict itself.

This shows the weakness of Nehamas's reading. Another weakness is Nehamas' focus on the more literary aspects of Nietzsche's thought. After Heidegger's major effort to show that Nietzsche is a conceptual thinker and not a "mere" poet-philosopher, this definitely seems like a step back in criticism.

Finally a positive point with respect to Nehamas' reading is the fact that he has shown that we must distinguish between perspectivism and relativism. There is definitely

a difference here, even if only a verbal one. The task for future Nietzsche criticism will be to clarify this distinction.

iv) Maudemarie Clark

Maudemarie Clark has provided an influential interpretation of Nietzsche in the field of Anglo-American scholarship.²²⁰ Her thesis is that Nietzsche ultimately rejects a metaphysical correspondence theory in favor of a common sense correspondence theory based on cognitive interests. This correspondence replaces the traditional correspondence to the thing-in-itself. Focusing on Nietzsche's development, Clark claims that Nietzsche was still influenced by Schopenhauer's representationalism in the early text *Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* (*Wahrheit und Lüge im Aussermoralischen Sinne*). According to Clark's reading, Nietzsche defends a correspondence between the thing-in-itself and appearance in this early text. As Nietzsche's philosophy evolves, he comes to reject this early metaphysical understanding of truth. Clark interprets *The History of an Error* in its last stage ("The real world has disappeared what is left the world of appearances. No. The world of appearances has vanished as well.") as providing evidence that Nietzsche has renounced the world of the thing-in-itself but also the distinction between thing-in-itself and appearances. What is left according to Clark is a world of empirical evidence that we can interpret in virtue of a "common sense" correspondence between the empirical facts and truth.

According to me, this reading is highly problematic. Clark writes: "Nietzsche's characterization of truths as illusions or fictions amounts to calling the empirical world, the world accessible through common sense and science, illusory or fictitious. His history of the 'true' world indicates that he gives up ascribing reality to any world other

²²⁰ Clark, M., *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. Cambridge, England, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

than the empirical world (stage 5), *and* that he recognizes that this requires him to relinquish his claim that the empirical world is illusory (stage 6). That he puts the logical consequence of stage 5 in a separate stage gives strong evidence that Nietzsche later recognized his initial failure to appreciate the consequences of denying the thing-in-itself, which means that he himself went through a period in which he denied the thing-in-itself, but continued to characterize the empirical world as mere appearance or illusion”²²¹

I interpret The History of an Error precisely as the fact that Nietzsche deconstructs the distinction between the thing-in-itself and appearances. This precludes a regression to the philosophy of empiricism or of Neo-Kantianism, as Clark claims. Nietzsche is more radical than that. He claims that the fact that there is no more transcendental ground for the world of appearances makes this world and its perception problematic. What is left is an eternal Becoming that is shot through with interpretation, perspective and contradiction. This world of Becoming has as principle the an-archic principle of will to power. Will to power is the last fact to which we come. There are no empirical facts according to Nietzsche but only interpretations that stem from will to power and its moral valuations.

v) John Richardson

John Richardson has written two important books on Nietzsche: *Nietzsche's System* and *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*.²²² I will focus on the first book since in my opinion it has provided the most interesting stimulus to Anglo-American research. For Richardson, as for most Anglo-American readings of Nietzsche (including Clark), the

²²¹ Clark, M., *op.cit.*, p.114.

²²² Richardson, J., *Nietzsche's System*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996 and *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004.

highest stakes in reading Nietzsche is to rescue him from the danger of relativism. That is often perceived as the most difficult problem that any reading of Nietzsche faces.

Richardson begins by stating the problem as follows: Nietzsche has a power ontology in the sense that he claims that at bottom everything is will to power. According to this understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy (heavily indebted to Heidegger even if this is not always acknowledged), the essence of beings is will to power. But, continues Richardson, Nietzsche also has a second teaching which consists in what many critics have called "perspectivism". Perspectivism is not exactly relativism but in practice it is often hard to differentiate one position from the other. As an example of Nietzsche's perspectivism, Richardson points to the following passage in which Nietzsche retorts to a possible critic that will to power is only an interpretation: "Gesetzt, dass auch dies nur Interpretation ist-und ihr werdet eifrig genug sein, dies einzuwenden ?-nun um so besser."²²³

So it seems that Nietzsche here grants that will to power and the power ontology associated with it is only an interpretation, a perspective and not something that can be rationally defended by giving causes. This in turn points to the danger of falling prey to a full-fledged relativism if we follow Nietzsche literally.

Richardson is right to think that this is a major problem in Nietzsche interpretation and he is not alone. So how does he solve the problem? Richardson, not unlike Maudemarie Clark, believes that ultimately Nietzsche functions with a correspondence theory of truth. He believes that the power ontology somehow trumps Nietzsche's perspectivism in the end. In order to show this, Richardson appeals to another text given by Nietzsche that many other Anglo-American commentators seem to pick up on (including Nehamas, Schacht and others):

Es giebt *nur* ein perspektivisches Sehen, *nur* ein perspektivisches “Erkennen” und *je mehr* Affekte wir über eine Sache zu Worte kommen lassen, je mehr Augen, verschiedene Augen wir uns für dieselbe Sache einzusetzen wissen, um so vollständiger wird unser “Begriff” dieser Sache, unsre “Objektivität” sein.²²⁴

Using this text and a Quinian reconstruction of the web of beliefs, Richardson attempts to show that the power ontology lies at the core of Nietzsche’s epistemology whereas the perspectivism lies at the edges of his theory of knowledge. Richardson has an interesting

Despite its interesting aspects, this reading is ultimately untenable in my opinion. It does not make enough of the onto-theological relation between the will to power and the eternal recurrence and of Nietzsche’s attempt to de-construct onto-theology. Nietzsche’s attempt to redeem humanity from revenge is a metaphysical goal as Heidegger has pointed out. Richardson himself is aware of this redeeming aspect of Nietzsche’s philosophy when he writes:

But in him this nostalgia is increasingly ruled by a Dionysian urge to show his love for past and present by destroying and remaking them, thereby ‘redeeming’ them. This Dionysian aspect is thus also Nietzsche’s messianic and revolutionary strain; it explains his great stress on the future.²²⁵

But Richardson is more interested in the epistemological aspects of Nietzsche’s metaphysics. This is evident in his way of framing the problem of metaphysics: he asks whether Nietzsche offers “a systematic truth about essence”²²⁶. In the end, Richardson’s thesis about the existence of truth as correspondence in Nietzsche seems predicated upon the existence of holistic “truth as coherence” that lies at the root of Quine’s web of beliefs. I am not sure if Richardson’s reading is quite consistent on this point since it does

²²³ *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 22, (KSA 5, p.37).

²²⁴ *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Dritte Abhandlung*, 12 (KSA 5, pp.364-365).

²²⁵ Richardson, J., *Nietzsche's System*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p.117.

seem like the web of beliefs which presupposes a notion of truth that is both empirical and hypothetical (i.e. open to revision) depends on a notion of truth as coherence. In fact it is not so much whether a “fact” corresponds to a truthful statement or representation that matters for Quine’s web of beliefs but what matters is how much and how well the totality of the web of statements or representations will map onto reality as a whole.

A further point on which I disagree with Richardson, and this point is crucial since it allows Richardson to re-construct Nietzsche’s thought from an epistemological perspective, is the interpretation of the correspondence theory of truth in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Almost all Anglo-American interpreters starting with Clark (and Schacht does something similar which pre-dates Clark’s reading) interpret Nietzsche’s concept of truth as possessing some sort of correspondence structure. I think there is something fundamental which all attempts of establishing truth as correspondence in Nietzsche’s work miss. Truth as correspondence pre-supposes (as Scheler was already aware in 1926²²⁷) that there is a divine (active) intellect in which the representation of the fact or the thing exists: that is, the correspondence is about facts or things in the world and a representation that exists in the mind of God (It is as classically stated by Aquinas: *adequatio intellectus ad rem*). But once one has given up on God as one might think Nietzsche had, the truth as correspondence vanishes as well.

The previous claims may be moderated a bit when we notice that it is true that many scientists today believe that their representations are “adequate” and correspond to reality and this is the case even though they do not believe in God. This is a strong point, but the correspondence theory of truth does seem to be undermined by Nietzschean perspectivism. Some philosophers like Rorty have argued that perspectives are

²²⁶ *Idem*, p.284.

²²⁷ Scheler, M., *L’homme et l’histoire*, Paris, Éditions Montaigne, 1955, p.36.

“incommensurable”. On this reading of perspectivism rather than a more charitable reading that believes that perspectives may be harmonized, the belief on truth as adequation does seem to depend on a “point of view from nowhere” or on the point of view of an ideal, “divine” observer.

By reducing Nietzsche’s thought to epistemology, Richardson despite his attempt to describe the Nietzschean perspectival ontology, misses the crucial metaphysical and theological core of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Although I do not defend a metaphysical reading of Nietzsche, but posit, contra Heidegger, the fact that Nietzsche emphasized Becoming over and against Being, I still think that the anti-metaphysics of Becoming cannot be reduced to an epistemology of claims relating to a web of beliefs as Richardson does.

Richardson has provided an interesting reading of Nietzsche and I am fundamentally in agreement with him insofar as he points a way out of the purely post-modern readings of Nehamas and Derrida (and to a certain extent Vattimo).

vi) Brian Leiter

Another important commentator in Anglo-American scholarship is Brian Leiter. He gives an influential analysis of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* in his *Nietzsche on Morality*.²²⁸ Leiter distinguishes between the post-modern reading of Nietzsche (Habermas, Derrida, Nehamas) and a naturalist reading of Nietzsche. This naturalist reading of Nietzsche depends on proving that “Nietzsche belongs not in the company of

²²⁸ Leiter, B., *Nietzsche on Morality*, New York, Routledge, 2002.

post-modernists like Foucault and Derrida, but rather in the company of naturalists like Hume and Freud - that is among broadly speaking, *philosophers of human nature*.”²²⁹

Leiter’s reading is heavily dependent on Clark’s interpretation of the concept of truth in Nietzsche.

In fact, Leiter claims that Clark put an end to purely post-modern readings in Nietzsche studies and established Nietzsche interpretation on a surer footing. While I believe that Clark’s interpretation is interesting and has contributed to the progress of Nietzsche studies, I do not think that we can simply decide between a naturalist and post-modernist Nietzsche. But the problems with Leiter’s reading of Nietzsche do not stop here. Leiter makes another controversial claim: he affirms that Nietzsche does not have any political theories or that he is an apolitical *esoterical* moralist. In my opinion, Leiter focuses too much on the mature writings where it is true that Nietzsche does not expound any explicit political theory.

²²⁹ [Leiter’s emphasis, P.C.], *ibidem*, pp.2-3.

Conclusion

In general the Continental interpretations of Nietzsche are much more physicalistic, vitalistic and anti-metaphysical reacting in great part to Heidegger's metaphysical reading of Nietzsche. Foremost among the most recent Continental readings is Müller-Lauter's interpretation of Nietzsche. Müller-Lauter challenged Heidegger's deep thesis of the unity of the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same. For Müller-Lauter, this unity of the will to power and eternal recurrence laid too much stress on the identification of will to power with *essentia* and eternal recurrence with *existentia*.

But Müller-Lauter went further, he claimed that the will to power was not a (unitary) principle as Heidegger had claimed. By affirming the unitary nature of the will to power as a principle under which all of Nietzsche's metaphysics could be subsumed, Heidegger made Nietzsche into the last metaphysician of the West. Here again, Müller-Lauter objected: for him metaphysics as metaphysics was taken apart within Nietzsche's thought.

It seems that this view of Nietzsche as metaphysician has effectively been challenged in both the Continental and the Anglo-American readings of Nietzsche. Heidegger's reading has become to a large extent untenable.

But the reasons for rejecting Heidegger's interpretation are different on the continent and in the world of Anglo-American philosophy. It seems as though both agree nonetheless that Heidegger sought to make Nietzsche into a metaphysician in order to show how he himself had stepped beyond his own idiosyncratic understanding of metaphysics.

In the Anglo-American tradition more emphasis has been laid on the fact that Nietzsche can be understood as a pragmatist-naturalist philosopher. This can be seen in

Clark and Leiter's readings. The Anglo-American readings are essentially epistemological. They attempt to read Nietzsche in contrast or in continuity with Hume, Wittgenstein and Quine. There is a great interest in establishing that Nietzsche's functions with a theory of truth as correspondence: this is the case in Richardson and Clark's readings.

Although I am defending an anti-metaphysical reading of Nietzsche, it does not mean that I believe that his thought can be full re-constructed from the epistemological point of view. In fact the position I am defending is ambiguous from the point of view of metaphysics: I believe that Nietzsche does possess something like a metaphysics of Becoming.

The concept of Becoming, though traditionally anti-metaphysical, possesses something like a metaphysical structure: it does so in virtue of being a finite/infinite totality. Becoming is eternal, infinite and absolute. But at the same time it is finite, incoherent, inconsistent and fragmentary: it is *adiaphoristic* and *chorismatic*. Becoming mediates between the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same. What recurs is the eternal recurrence of the Becoming of the will to power.

I think that it is correct to affirm from Nietzsche's point of view that he was combating what he understood as the Western project of metaphysics that was being perpetuated in the tradition of Platonism. But there are elements in the young Nietzsche's philosophy which are close to affirming a Heraclitean eternity and absoluteness of Becoming. What is eternal then is not an other-worldly abstract world of Being, but the concreteness of the senses and the opposites that engage themselves in perpetual struggles only to come-into-being, to pass-away and go-under. What is eternal and absolute is change, movement, transformation and transfiguration.

Aristotle's Account of Becoming in Light of Nietzsche

In this section I will compare Nietzsche's understanding of Becoming to that of Aristotle. Aristotle's analysis of Becoming is fundamental to Western metaphysics. It founds the discourse on Becoming in Western metaphysics. Although Plato had begun to describe the concept of Becoming through his *genesis eis ousian*,²³⁰ this concept is not fully developed until Aristotle's treatment of the concept of Becoming in the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*. Some might say that the philosopher who discovered Becoming is Heraclitus. I agree with this assessment, but for me, Heraclitus' doctrines on Becoming are at best fragmentary and we do not have a fully developed, rational treatment of Becoming until the work of Aristotle. A comparison between Aristotle's understanding of Becoming and Nietzsche's could be very fruitful. I would assert that even though Becoming in Nietzsche is perhaps not as rigorous a concept as in Aristotle, Nietzsche does progress with respect to this thinker in his analysis of Becoming. I will claim that Nietzsche de-ontologizes Becoming and that he does this by removing the objective teleology that Aristotle, and later Hegel, still incorporate into their concept of Becoming. In this way, Nietzsche will transform an objective teleology into a subjective teleology.

This section of my dissertation can best be summarized in the following manner. In order to understand Aristotle's account of Becoming, we must understand where Becoming takes place. It is safe to assert that Becoming takes place for Aristotle within metaphysical substance (*ousia*). Thus, in order to understand Aristotle's account of Becoming we must understand what exactly he means by substance. Aristotle considers this carefully in the *Metaphysics*. For Aristotle the concepts of Being and of substance are inherently linked. This leads Aristotle to famously assert in book *Zeta* of the

²³⁰ Plato, *Philebus*, 26 d 8.

Metaphysics (1028b4) that the age-old question “What is Being ?” could be solved if the answer to the alternative question “What is substance ?” were found.

In order to understand and clarify the question “What is substance ?”, we must differentiate between primary substance and secondary substance. Aristotle does this in the *Categories*. There, he distinguishes between the individual substances and the genres and kinds. The genres can function as both subjects and predicates as in they do in the following examples respectively: “Man is mortal” and “Socrates is a man”. “Socrates”, on the other hand, cannot be predicated of anything. He constitutes an individual substance and this is what Aristotle calls primary substance. Genres and kinds are, accordingly, secondary substances. In the *Metaphysics*, there is an evolution with respect to the conception of substance. The conception of substance is laid out in books Z, H and Θ.

The attempt to answer the question “What is substance ?” is complex. What is involved here is a tension in the Aristotelian *corpus* between subjects of change and subjects of predication. In the *Categories*, Aristotle considers subjects of predication, things or objects of which things are said. In the *Physics*, Aristotle comes to be interested in objects in which change occurs (subjects of change). But according to him, there is a connection between subjects of change and subjects of predication. A subject of change can have one predicate belonging to it at one time that does not belong to it at another time. Subjects of change, that is, are also subjects of predication.

For Aristotle, actuality has priority over potentiality. This is important because we are attempting to understand how entelecheia, actuality and potentiality are related in Aristotle’s complex account of Becoming. Next, I will give an account of how Aristotle describes change and Becoming, in terms of the relationship between his concepts of matter and form/species. I will explain why for Aristotle the relationship between

actuality must be explained in terms of final (entelechical) causation. This will bring us back to the beginning of the section where I had discussed Aristotle's account of Becoming in terms of the relationship between actuality, potentiality and entelecheia. Finally, I will to explain what Nietzsche's progress with respect to Aristotle consists in when it comes to the explanation of Becoming. My thesis will be that through the elimination of teleology or entelechy from Becoming, Nietzsche also removes permanence and permanentization from metaphysics. This removal of permanence from within the metaphysical tradition amounts to a de-construction of metaphysics as onto-theology.

A process derives its meaning from the fact that it has a beginning or initial state, a direction, and an end or final state. Without the final state, there is no closure to the process and this lack of closure prevents the process from possessing any meaning. The final or end state is projected according to Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism onto a beyond. This final state becomes the true world of Being that is devoid of any Becoming. This beyond has been differently interpreted whether in the Platonic or the Christian tradition. It could mean the realm of the Ideas, heaven or the Godhead of the divinity itself. Thus, according to Nietzsche, we derive from the world of appearances a concept of purpose which is then stabilized, cleansed of the notion of change inherent in it and then projected it onto the beyond, thus splitting the world of phenomena into two: a true world of Being and a world of appearances and Becoming.

The concept of purpose or of entelechy that is derived from the world of Becoming (and this understanding has been strongly determined by Aristotle's understanding of Becoming in the Western metaphysical tradition) is what allows the first stabilization and permanentization of a world of Being. It is only through the positing of purpose within Becoming, that permanence and stability within Being are achieved.

However, through this positing of purpose within Becoming, the stability and permanence necessary to “project” the concept of God is also achieved.

In Nietzsche’s narration of The History of an Error, the problem is that the world of appearances and of Becoming disappears as well. By eliminating the dichotomy between the world of appearances and the world of essences or of Being, Nietzsche eliminates teleology from Becoming and this is what constitutes his progress with respect to Aristotle and Hegel. Here the notion of progress must not be understood as a re-introduction of teleology in the line of evolution from Aristotle and Hegel to Nietzsche. Progress means just that: change and evolution, but a directedness and a meaning-schema from Aristotle and Hegel to Nietzsche that could again re-interpret a progressive movement of clarification of the concept of Becoming from these philosophers to Nietzsche is ruled out.

Aristotle’s analysis of movement and Becoming is divided into a Becoming that occurs according to nature (*kata phusin*) and a Becoming that occurs according to *techne*. I will clarify at the end of this section of my dissertation what exactly is the difference between Becoming and movement. Aristotle defines and describes the concept of movement in terms of the sub-categories of actuality and potentiality. As Ernesto Berti puts it: “La definizione del movimento in termini di potenza ed atto dimostra pertanto che nella cosa che si muove deve esistere qualche forma di molteplicità...”²³¹ Aristotle’s “starting point” is a critique of Parmenides’ position on Becoming. It is useful to recall what Parmenides had claimed with respect to Becoming. For Parmenides there is no possibility of a Becoming either starting from Being, because it is eternal and unmoved, or starting from non-Being, since non-Being cannot be in any way. Aristotle opposes to

²³¹ [The definition of movement in terms of potency and act demonstrates nevertheless that in the thing that moves there must exist a form of multiplicity, my translation, P.C.] Berti, E., *Aristotele: dalla dialettica*

Parmenides the claim that Becoming may occur both with respect to Being, conceived as matter or with respect to non-Being, conceived as the absence (*privatio*) of form. As

Pierre Aubenque puts it:

Il est à la fois vrai de dire que l'être provient du non-être et qu'il provient de l'être, à condition de n'entendre pas deux fois le mot *être* dans le même sens; l'être en acte ne vient pas de l'être en acte, mais de l'être en puissance, lequel est un non-être en acte.²³²

We now arrive at a problem that is of the utmost importance for the investigations we have pursued here. The problem consists in giving a proper definition of Aristotle's term of *entelecheia*. This problem is of importance to us because it was our claim that Nietzsche eliminates *entelecheia* from his account of Becoming in favor of the terms *dunamis* and *energeia*. However, it turns out that *entelecheia* proves a difficult term to define in Aristotle's complex account of movement and Becoming. Some have claimed that : "...tout en signalant cette différence d'origine et de sens entre *energeia* et *entelecheia*, Aristote n'y attache guère d'importance: en fait il emploie indifféremment les deux termes:..."²³³

Others, such as Thomas Aquinas, have attempted to define entelechy as the "actuality of potentiality in relation to that which itself must actualize itself."²³⁴ But Aristotle defines motion, and this is important for our investigation, in terms of entelechy: "motion is the entelechy of the movable qua movable, the cause of the attribute being in contact with what can move."²³⁵

In book Theta of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle describes the relationship between actuality (*energeia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*). For Aristotle, actuality is higher than

alla filosofia prima, p.419, Bompiani, Milano, 2004.

²³² Aubenque, P., *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote*, p.445, PUF, Paris, 1962.

²³³ Leblond, J. M., *Logique et Méthode chez Aristote: étude sur la recherche des principes dans la physique aristotélécienne*, p.429, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1973.

²³⁴ Aquinas, *Comm. In Octo Libris Physica Aristotelis*, Lib III, Cap.I, Lect II, nn.3 et 5.

potentiality as I have pointed out. Thus Aristotle writes : “From our discussion of the various senses of ‘prior’, it is clear that actuality is prior to potency.” (1049b) With respect to the temporal relation Aristotle claims that actuality is prior to potentiality in one sense and in another it isn’t. (1049b10). Aristotle makes a distinction between priority in *logos*, in time, and in substance.

Actuality is prior to potentiality with respect to time for the following reason. At first it might seem as if potentiality were prior to actuality; that is, it might seem that the flower is developed from a seed that potentially contains the flower and its development within it. But this is wrong according to Aristotle. For him, the individual or particular seed comes from an actual flower and thus the actual flower precedes the potential seed both logically and temporally. Logically, according to *logos*, the actual flower gives rise to an actual seed. Thus we must refer to the flower as an actuality in order to describe its potentiality which is the seed. As Aristotle puts it: ‘visible’ means ‘capable of *being seen*’; ‘buildable’ means ‘capable of *being built*’ (1049b14-16)

Temporally, the same pattern is repeated, we need an actual flower to give birth in a temporal development to an actual seed. From this seed the flower is again reproduced and this is the movement of potentiality. Again, in the words of Aristotle: “the actual which is identical in species though not in number with a potentially existing thing is prior to it” (1049b18-19).

The final reason why Aristotle claims that actuality has priority over potentiality has to do with the nature of substance. There are two reasons why Aristotle gives actuality priority over potentiality with respect to substance. The first has to do with his account of final causation. Thus Aristotle writes: “the actuality is the end, and it is for the

²³⁵ Aristotle, *Physics*, 202 a7.

sake of this that the potentiality is acquired ... animals do not see in order that they may have sight, but they have sight that they may see ... matter exists in a potential state, just because it may come to its form; and when it exists *actually*, then it is in its form” (1050a9-17).

By claiming that actual substance is more fundamental than potential substance, Aristotle consolidates the privilege of the eternal, the permanent, the stable and the immutable within Western metaphysics. This privilege had already been established by Plato when he had conceived of the idea of the Good as Being. But Aristotle reinforces the Platonic onto-theological armature by introducing the notion of *entelecheia* into Becoming and showing more clearly how the eternal (actual) and the perishable (potential) are interconnected. Becoming is conceptualized in Aristotle as a movement from actuality to potentiality but this occurs through the introduction of a purpose that links actuality to potentiality. *Entelecheia* is sometimes itself translated as actuality. In fact purpose or *entelecheia* is closer to actuality than to potentiality. This privilege of actuality and permanence is effectively criticized in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Becoming is conceived from the side of potentiality and im-permanence. Nietzsche removes from Aristotle’s account of Becoming the notion of purpose. But it was purpose that created the stability between potentiality and actuality and ultimately within actuality itself. By removing purpose from within Becoming, Nietzsche effectively deconstructs the onto-theology that experiences one of its key transitions in Aristotle’s philosophy.²³⁶ Insofar,

²³⁶ My claim that onto-theology begins with Plato is substantiated by Heidegger’s understanding of this concept. Onto-theology begins in Plato’s thought of Being as Idea of the Good and as permanent presence. It is *completed* once in the first beginning of Western thought in Aristotle’s metaphysics which identifies Being with the highest *ousia* of the *theous*. The *noesis noeseos* of Aristotelian onto-theology already closes the circle of the first, Greek, onto-theological beginning. The identity of thought thinking itself as thought, is the second important hinge after the identification of Being as the idea of the Good as *permanent presence*. But onto-theology, although complete for the first time in Aristotle, begins anew in Philo’s and Augustine’s interpretations of Plato and in Augustine’s identification of the God of the Scriptures, of the Ancient and New Testaments, with the Greek *logos/nous* of Being.

however, as Nietzsche still conceives the “death of God” in terms of the disappearance (or “forgetfulness” to anticipate Heidegger’s language) of Being, he is still caught within onto-theology. This is the case because, Nietzsche thus accepts the Western tradition’s identification of God and Being as permanent presence and lack of movement.

Hegel's Account of Becoming in Light of Nietzsche

In the following I will establish the rudiments of a comparison between Hegel's understanding of Becoming and Nietzsche's. This is necessary because after Aristotle, Hegel has perhaps given us the strongest and most rigorous analysis of Becoming. Hegel's understanding of Becoming is radically conditioned by that of Aristotle, but Hegel also develops an original understanding of Becoming with respect to Aristotle. For these reasons, I take Hegel as my second interpretative guide against which to characterize Nietzsche's radical understanding of Becoming.

For Hegel, Becoming has a direction. Hegel decomposes Becoming (*Werden*) in the *Logic* into *Entstehen* and *Vergehen*. But the directionality of Becoming is reduced to a simple transition between pure Being and pure non-Being. One must nevertheless be precise at this juncture. In fact, some argue that Hegel never speaks of a transition between Being and Nothing. Rather Hegel claims that "was die Wahrheit ist, ist weder das Sein noch das Nichts, sondern dass das Sein in Nichts und das Nichts in Sein – nicht übergeht, sondern-übergegangen ist".²³⁷ One could thus argue that the transition between Being and Nothing and between Nothing and Being has always already taken place. In relation to this Gadamer writes in the Idea of Hegel's Logic:

Wenn wir uns also den Fortschritt vom Werden zum Dasein klarmachen wollen, so wird der Sinn von Hegels dialektischer Ableitung über das allgemein Einleuchtende hinaus zu beschreiben sein: Da der Unterschied von Sein und Nichts inhaltlos ist, ist auch die Bestimmtheit des 'von' und des 'zu', die das Werden ausmachen, nicht vorhanden. Lediglich das ist da, dass es jedenfalls ein 'von-zu' ist und das jedes 'von-zu' als ein 'von-her' oder als ein 'auf-hin' gedacht werden kann. Was ist, ist also die reine Struktur des Übergangs selbst.²³⁸

²³⁷ Quoted by Gadamer in *Die Idee der Hegelschen Logik*, GW 3, p.78, In *Hegel's Dialectic, Five Hermeneutical Studies*, translation P. Christopher Smith, New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 1976.

²³⁸ Gadamer, H.-G., *Ibidem*, p.79.

This transitional role of Becoming is what allows Hegel to affirm that Becoming rather than Being and non-Being (*Nichts* or *Nichtsein*), is the first truth of the *Logic*. Becoming is the mediated synthesis between pure Being and pure non-Being and this allows a differentiation between these states, but this conceptualization of Becoming is not radical. A thought of pure Becoming like that of Nietzsche conceptualizes Becoming as having no directionality, no *telos*. For Nietzsche, Becoming moves but it does not aim at anything and it does not fulfill anything. This is not the same as claiming that Becoming moves from determinate Being to determinate non-Being (*Nichts* or *Nichtsein*) as Hegel would affirm.

In “The Idea of Hegel’s Logic”, Gadamer makes the following claim:

Alles Werden ist Werden von etwas, das dann durch sein Gewordensein ‘da ist’. Das ist die alte Wahrheit, die schon Plato im ‘Philebos’ formuliert als die *gegenemene ousia* bzw. *genesis eis ousian*. Es liegt im Sinne des Werdens selbst, das seine Bestimmtheit in dem findet, was da am Ende geworden ist.²³⁹

However, the determination of Becoming into determined non-Being is not a determination of Becoming but a determination of Being. In the face of Being, Becoming moves but does not determine itself. In the introduction to the *Logic*, Hegel analyzes Kant’s critique of the ontological proof of God. In the process of this analysis, Hegel claims that “Also enthalte, fährt er [Kant, P.C.] das Mögliche nicht mehr als das Wirkliche; hundert wirkliche Taler enthalten nicht das mindeste mehr als hundert mögliche”.²⁴⁰ This positing of possibility as stronger than reality (actuality), or at least as equivalent to it, in God, is combated by Hegel. Hegel is a good Aristotelian insofar as for him, reality (actuality) is higher than possibility (potentiality). Hegel concludes his

²³⁹ Gadamer, H.-G., *idem*, p.76. “All becoming is a becoming of something which exists as a result of having become. That is an ancient truth, one already formulated by Plato in the *Philebus* as the *gegenemene ousia* or the *genesis eis ousian* respectively. It lies in the very meaning of Becoming itself that it reaches

discussion of Kant's critique of the ontological proof of God: "die abstrakte Definition Gottes ist dagegen eben dies, dass sein Begriff und sein Sein *ungetrennt* und *untrennbar* sind".²⁴¹

The elimination of teleology from Becoming operated by Nietzsche's philosophy leaves us with a pure potentiality that potentializes itself and projects itself onto an actuality that actualizes itself without teleological middle term. Hegel recuperates the concept of teleology from Aristotle's philosophy (and from the way this concept is elaborated in Kant's third *Critique*). In Hegel, teleology is the constant movement of Being towards a fuller determination of itself. The *Logic* begins with what is the least determinate: Being and non-Being.

But Hegel quickly concludes that the representation of the beginning is nothing (*Nichts*). Not only that. Hegel claims that in order to think analytically the representation of the beginning one has to think that the beginning is constituted by the movement from nothing to something (*Etwas*). But if this idea of something is present in the representation of the beginning, this implies that Being is also included in the representation of the beginning, since something must have a Being. Thus, Hegel arrives at the conclusion that Being and Nothing are both present in the representation of the beginning. In this way, Hegel believes that he has answered the objection that Science must begin with the representation of the beginning. He believes that if we start with such a representation, it is equivalent to starting with Being and Nothing or Nothing and Being which both are the simplest, most general and indeterminate concepts.

But the concept of pure Being is unsatisfactory for Hegel. Being is that which must determine itself. This is the case because, as we have seen, pure Being turns out to

determinacy in that which has become."

²⁴⁰ Hegel, G.-W.-F., *Logik I*, p.90.

be equivalent to pure nothingness (*Nichts*). Before passing to the concept of *Dasein* (existence), which is the first concept that Hegel treats in the *Logic of Being* after pure Being, we must consider something that is of utmost importance for this dissertation. The first synthesis of Being and Nothing is nothing other than the central concept of this dissertation : Becoming. In order to understand why Becoming is so important for Hegel we must refer to a book that he had previously published in 1807 and to a concept that was central in that book: *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* and the concept of *Geist*.

In the *Phänomenologie*, the various figures of *Geist* all “go under” until the final stage of absolute knowledge is attained. Hence the figures of *Geist* must constantly transform themselves, moving to new embodiments while at the same time negating and preserving (in the sense of *Aufhebung*) their previous embodiments. This perpetual movement and transformation is what Hegel calls *Werden*. An important question for Hegel scholarship is whether Hegel arrests the development and movement of Becoming in the *Phänomenologie* by introducing the stage of absolute knowledge. There have been many interesting attempts to claim that the Hegelian system could be reconstructed by eliminating the absolute end-point and claiming that the movement of rational Becoming never stops.

The problem of the transition from Being to Becoming in the *Logic* hinges on the relationship between the *Logic* and the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. This problem has to be clarified in terms of Hegel’s concept of the dialectic. In relation to this, Gadamer writes:

Hegel selbst hat in seiner Einleitung in die ‘Logik’ die Dialektik der Phänomenologie als ein erstes Beispiel seiner dialektischen Methode zitiert. Insofern besteht gewiss kein völliger Unterschied zwischen der in der ‘Phänomenologie’ und in der ‘Logik’ vorliegenden Dialektik. Die frühere Meinung, die durch die spätere

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.92.

‘Enzyklopädie’ geprägt war, wonach die phänomenologische Dialektik noch nicht die reine Methode der Dialektik darstelle, ist also nicht haltbar.²⁴²

Others, like Charles Taylor claim that the transition between Being and Becoming in the *Logic* lacks the proper grounding. Taylor claims elsewhere that the derivation of Becoming from Being is perhaps convincing for those who allow themselves the conclusions of the *Phenomenology*. Taylor claims that Hegel’s dialectic as exposed in the *Phenomenology* cannot be held to be of a strict nature. In this sense, Taylor splits the notion of the dialectic into two: a historical dialectic that is what operates mainly in the *Phenomenology* and an ontological dialectic that operates in the *Logic*.

Taylor elaborates on this distinction between a historical dialectic and an ontological dialectic in the following passage:

And we in fact we find dialectics of these two sorts in Hegel. His historical dialectics are of the first form: certain historical forms of life are prey to inner contradiction, either because they are doomed to frustrate the very purpose for which they exist (e.g., the master-slave relation), or because they are bound to generate an inner conflict between different conditions which are equally essential to the fulfillment of the purpose [...] But Hegel also presents dialectics of the other kind, which we can call ‘ontological’. We have an example in the opening section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and also in the *Logic*. Here we are not dealing with historical change, or at least not primarily. Rather we are deepening our conception of a given standard and the reality which meets it. And essential to the dialectical argument is the notion that the standard is already met. It is because we know this that we know that any conception of the purpose or standard which shows it as unrealizable must be a faulty conception; and it is this which takes us from stage to stage of the dialectic.²⁴³

²⁴² *Idem*, p.72, “In the introduction to the *Logic*, Hegel himself cites the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* as a first example of his dialectical method. Thus there is certainly no ultimate difference between the dialectic present in the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*. The belief based on the subsequent *Encyclopedia*, that phenomenological dialectic did not yet represent the pure method of dialectic, is thus untenable.”

²⁴³ Taylor, *Hegel*, C., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (England), p.131.

The traditional critique that had been addressed to Hegel's *Logic* by Schelling to cite only the most illustrious critic, asked how it was possible for movement to be inserted into thought or Being. Was it not the case that the movement that Hegel claimed was implicit in the categories of thought was only injected from the outside and that the *Logic's* beginning in fact lacked a proper grounding? Yet, as has been argued by Gadamer among others, the movement does not get into Being as something that is merely exterior to it. Being and Nothing are not existences that can be conceptualized independently of thought. They do not take place at all outside the movement of thought. Thus Gadamer writes:

Wer fragt: wie kommt das Sein in Bewegung ?, sollte sich eingestehen, dass er damit von der Bewegung des Denkens, in der er sich so fragend befindet, abstrahiert [...] Aber wenn auch nichts anderes als ein leeres Anschauen oder Denken da ist, ist in Wahrheit die Bewegung des Sichbestimmens, also das Werden da. "Es ist ein grosse Einsicht, die man darin hat, dass man erkannt hat, dass Sein und Nichtsein Abstraktionen ohne Wahrheit sind, das erste Wahre nur das Werden ist" ²⁴⁴

The problem with arguments that try to re-construct Hegel's system with reference to the concept of Becoming is the following: if we remove the end-state or end-point of absolute knowledge in the *Phenomenology* and of the absolute concept in the *Logic*, then it seems that we have to remove the problem of making an absolute beginning which seems crucial to Hegel. What we then have are these purely transitional states without beginning or end. Of course, the historical dialectics that Taylor talks about make sense in the sense that they function as good "interpretations" of history. However, what we have to ask ourselves is the grounding of the ontological dialectic. If we agree with Gadamer that there does not seem to be a difference between the ontological dialectic and the historical dialectic, but that there is only one kind of "phenomenological dialectic",

then the problem of grounding the ontological dialectic does not seem to cause such a great problem.

In Hegel's philosophy Becoming functions as a form of mediation. What mediates the immediate in Hegel is Becoming. But this Becoming is essentially characterized by its dialectical and teleological natures. This Becoming is the the Becoming of the Absolute that is concept and that wants to be *bey uns*. Insofar as Becoming is still conceived teleologically by Hegel, he is the inheritor of the onto-theological tradition which Nietzsche completes. Nietzsche completes this tradition because he accepts the identification between God and Being as permanent presence. But this identification presupposes the identity philosophy that is at work in German philosophy in general and in Hegel's philosophy in particular. The logical and metaphysical identity principle is deeply criticized by Nietzsche in his reception of German Idealism. By removing teleology from within Becoming and by criticizing logical and metaphysical identity, Nietzsche goes beyond Hegel and onto-theology. In doing this he radicalizes Becoming and allows thought to conceive of onto-theology non-teleologically.

Hegel's ultimate point is that what *is*, is determined and determinate Becoming. But this is precisely what Nietzsche's philosophy of Becoming combats. For Nietzsche what is more fundamental than Being is Becoming. Being is the *undarstellbar*, unrepresentable not unlike for the German Romantics. Becoming is both fundamental and in-determinate and it is this in-determinacy that allows thought and reality to exist.

²⁴⁴ Gadamer, H.-G., *Gesammelte Werke, Band 3*, p.79, J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1987.

SECTION 3 Becoming in Context

3.1 The Problem of Becoming and the Critique of Metaphysics, Truth and Morality

In this chapter, I would like to highlight the suspicion that Nietzsche harbors toward the substance/subject metaphysics. This is in part due to an original understanding of language by Nietzsche to of his conception of Becoming. Pure Becoming makes the existence of substance impossible. This is the case because change, here, goes all the way down in a manner of speaking. Nietzsche eliminates all forms of permanence and stability that were associated with traditional substance/subject metaphysics. This elimination occurs through the dislodging of teleology from within Becoming. If Becoming aimed at something ultimate as a point of stability, an Archimedean point could be established from which to derive rational discourse. But ultimately Nietzsche denies us such a stable perspective.

Nietzsche develops a deep critique of metaphysics and logic. In the middle period of Nietzsche's writings, that is mainly constituted by the writings *Human, All-too-Human*, *Dawn* and *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche begins to develop a critique of metaphysical and logical causality, identity, subjectivity and substance. This critique is pursued throughout the rest of the middle period, into the period of maturity and extends to the unpublished fragments corresponding to what later became known as the *Will to Power*. The critique is a sophisticated one. It rests essentially on a rejection of the principles of consciousness, identity and causality.

The first major step undertaken in the rejection of the metaphysical and logical principles of consciousness, identity and causality is the connection established by

Nietzsche between them and the problem of language. As Nietzsche says in *Human, All-too-Human* :

Die Bedeutung der Sprache für die Entwicklung der Cultur liegt darin, dass in ihr der Mensch eine eigene Welt neben die andere stellte, einen Ort, welchen er für so fest hielt, um von ihm aus die übrige Welt aus den Angeln zu heben und sich zum Herrn derselben zu machen. Insofern der Mensch an die Begriffe und Namen der Dinge als an *aeternae veritates* durch lange Zeitstrecken hindurch geglaubt hat, hat er sich jenen Stolz angeeignet, mit dem er sich über das Thier erhob: er meinte wirklich in der Sprache die Erkenntnis der Welt zu haben.²⁴⁵

For Nietzsche, the subject and substance are linguistic inventions. We exist in a world of linguistic fictions. The greatest fictions of all are those of metaphysical and logical unity and identity. They are linguistic creations. The Indo-european languages have a subject-predicate structure that explains the constructions inherent in Western metaphysics.

Substance, which is whatever remains when all the physical attributes have been methodically removed from a subject (Aristotle), is itself derived from the grammatical structure of Indo-european language. That a sentence has a subject-predicate structure is what determines, according to Nietzsche, the reflection on substance and the ensuing metaphysics that is associated with such a reflection.

Here a precision must be made on the nature of the term “predicate”. In grammar and in logic the usage of the term “predicate” differs. In the sentence “Men are mortal”, “Men” is the subject and “are mortal” is the predicate according to a grammatical analysis of the sentence. According to a logical analysis of the sentence “Men” is the subject and the predicate is “mortal”. Logic thus separates the verb and the attributes or objects within the grammatical predicate. Nietzsche’s thesis is that the grammatical structure that pre-exists and makes possible the logical-metaphysical analysis is what

²⁴⁵ *MA I*, 11, (*KSA 2*, p.30).

determines the development of a substance-metaphysics. The connection between the grammatical subject and the substance metaphysics might not be obvious here. It must be remembered that for Aristotle (in the *Categories* at least), metaphysical substance (*ousia*) was a subject of which all attributes could be predicated but which could not itself be predicated of anything else. Thus, this might vindicate Nietzsche's thesis that substance is obtained through a reflection on the subject-predicate (this time understood grammatically) structure of language. But is not Nietzsche's position a form of linguistic idealism? Does Nietzsche not pre-suppose that objects are fundamentally linguistic and do not possess any existence outside of language? The removal of attributes from a subject suggested by Aristotle might occur *realiter* and not just *inside* a system of linguistic signs.²⁴⁶ The removal of attributes from a subject is analytic but this analysis might occur through the medium of thought and not through the medium of language. But Nietzsche has probably made an advance here that anticipates the philosophies of language of the twentieth century. These philosophies claim that thought incarnates itself in language and that language is the medium of thought.

There is an ambiguity in Nietzsche's reasoning. At times it seems that the substance-metaphysics is purely derived from the grammatical structure of language. At other times when Nietzsche claims that the substance-concept is derived from the subject-concept and not the other way around, it seems that Nietzsche wishes to derive substance from an "inner" psychological sense that would have been projected onto the outside world. However, the inner-outer distinction is heavily criticized by Nietzsche. He claims that we do not have privileged access to the world of inner sense.

²⁴⁶ This problem of the interiority and exteriority of something to a system of linguistic signs has been brilliantly analyzed by Derrida in *De la grammatologie*, pp.46-96 Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1967, in particular the chapters Le dehors et le dedans and Le dehors [next word is crossed out, an allusion to Heidegger, P.C.] est le dedans.

The world of inner sense is as much an illusion for Nietzsche as the world of outer sense. The problem for Nietzsche is how it would be possible to know our inner sense and our outer sense. It must be recognized that this is a fundamentally epistemological way of putting the problem. Nietzsche is in this sense repeating Kant's problem of the conditions of possibility of knowledge, but he will arrive at radically different conclusions. We might be inclined to ask whether this repetition or quasi-repetition of the critical project after the advances of German Idealism (Schelling, Hegel) in the critique of the purely epistemological point of view of Kant, does not make Nietzsche's project a bit regressive. The knowledge that Nietzsche possessed of natural history, of Darwin and Lamarck, certainly introduced fresh ideas into this understanding of the process of knowledge and cognition.

It is pretty safe however to affirm that Nietzsche was not too familiar with Hegel's critique of Kant's epistemology. This is true because Nietzsche was in part blinded by the Schopenhauerian interpretation of Kant and Hegel and that these interpretations were rather incomplete and even poor at least as far as Schopenhauer's assessment of Hegel is concerned.

Nietzsche overcomes Hegel and this is due to two factors. The faculty of knowledge is re-directed in Nietzsche to its physiological origins and there is thus a deepening in Nietzsche of the understanding of the unconscious. It must be acknowledged though, that the notion of the unconscious is already present obliquely in Hegel for whom the labor of the concept in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* consists in teaching natural consciousness for which truth is still latent or unconscious how to become conscious of itself. Nevertheless, there is a deepening of the concept of the unconscious in Nietzsche insofar as it cannot be dialectically recuperated by consciousness as in Hegel's philosophy.

The second advance of Nietzsche with respect to Hegel consists in a radicalization of Becoming. Hegel affirms that he is a Heraclitean and that there is not a sentence of Heraclitus that he has not taken up in his *Science of Logic*, but we are forced to admit that, by comparison to Nietzsche, Hegel is much closer to Parmenides. We may illustrate this by noticing that in the *Science of Logic* it is Being and not Becoming that determines itself and fills itself with content. But this determination of Being is at the same time the determination of thought that completes itself when substance is identified with subject. Hegel thus operates with the identity of Being and thought characteristic of Parmenides' philosophy.

For Nietzsche, there is no causality because the cause is always introduced after the fact. An event occurs: somebody wills to move his foot and the foot moves. For Nietzsche these two events are not connected by a cause and effect relationship. Rather, the fact that the foot moved is only an interpretation of the will that tried to express itself in action. Nietzsche claims:

Wir haben unser Willens-Gefühl, unser 'Freiheits-Gefühl', unser Verantwortlichkeits-Gefühl und unsere Absicht von einem Thun in den Begriff 'Ursache' zusammengefasst: *causa efficiens* und *finalis* ist in der Grundconception Eins.²⁴⁷

The problem of causality needs to be examined in terms of three aspects. First, the causality of objects upon objects, second the causality of thought upon objects, and third, the causality of thought upon thought. The problem is that ultimately, for Nietzsche, the first two causalities are reducible to the third type of causality.

According to Nietzsche, the intellect is not made in such a way as to be able to perceive and conceive Becoming:

²⁴⁷ KSA 13, 14 [98].

Unser Intellekt ist nicht zum Begreifen des Werdens eingerichtet, er strebt die allgemeine Starrheit zu beweisen, Dank seiner Abkunft aus *Bildern*. Alle Philosophen haben das Ziel gehabt, zum Beweis des ewigen Beharrens, weil der Intellekt darin seine eigene Form und Wirkung fühlt...²⁴⁸

What expresses itself in a human subject is will to power according to Nietzsche. This notion is made up of some fundamental logical components. Before undertaking a description of will to power and what that notion means for Nietzsche, certain preparatory remarks are in order. The critical part of Nietzsche's project, the one that destroys and deconstructs metaphysics *avant la lettre* is inextricably bound up with the positive part of his project. Will to power is a positive teaching. As Heidegger has famously asserted it is part of a "Nietzschean metaphysics". So an important question for the understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy is how the more critical or sceptical aspects of his teaching connect to the positive perhaps more "metaphysical" aspects of his philosophy. In short, we will have to explain how Nietzsche can be both the most perspicacious critic of metaphysics since Kant and perhaps a metaphysician in his own right. We will have to decide what this apparent incoherence in Nietzsche's philosophy means.

Let us return then to will to power. The aspects connected to this concept that we need to explain are truth, play of forces, conditions of enhancement and preservation, life and art. Nietzsche claims that: "Wille zur Macht ist das letzte Faktum zu dem wir hinunterkommen."²⁴⁹ Will to power is conceptually linked to truth and will to truth. For Nietzsche, truth exists only insofar as it is posited by will to power. Truth is a vital error.

²⁴⁸ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 9, 11 [153].

²⁴⁹ Quoted by Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche*, Erster Band, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1961, p.12, (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. I, Translation Krell, p.4, hereafter this book will simply be quoted as *Nietzsche Vol. I-4* depending on the volume of the English translation given by Krell), from now on this book will be simply quoted as *Nietzsche I*.

It is the type of error without which human beings cannot live. This leads to the discussion of what Nietzsche means by life.

Life is characterized as a multiplicity of forces.²⁵⁰ This multiplicity of forces is a play of forces. This play of forces constitutes life and it cannot in the last analysis be grounded or justified. Inherent to the notion of life is value-positing. Each form of life which is the result of a play of forces, establishes certain values that are posited in such a way as to preserve and enhance that form of life.

Nietzsche claims that forces interact, struggle with each other and come to a certain equilibrium. But this equilibrium is ephemeral and to think of it as something eternal amounts to deceiving oneself. The equilibrium is destroyed anew by the appearance of different configurations of forces. Because of changes occurring in the configurations of forces, new struggles ensue. Therefore, we understand will to power as the movement of beings whereby they engage in struggles with themselves. The struggle comes about because each being, as an instantiation of will to power wants to enhance itself and become more powerful. Truth is the apparent equilibrium reached by the forces in their struggle with one another. According to Nietzsche, the philosophical tradition has named truth this apparent equilibrium, this petrification of the perspectival, force-laden interpretations of things. For Nietzsche,

“[Wahrheit ist] ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen, kurz eine Summe von menschlichen Relationen, die, poetisch und rhetorisch gesteigert, übertragen, geschmückt wurden, und die nach langem Gebrauche einem Volke fest, canonisch und verbindlich dünken: die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, dass sie welche sind, Metaphern, die abgenützt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind, Münzen, die ihr Bild verloren haben und nun als Metall, nicht mehr als Münzen in Betracht kommen.”²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ *KSA* 10, 24 [14].

Very early on, Nietzsche examined in his works the importance of the concept of truth namely in *On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense*. Nietzsche's relationship to the concept of truth is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, Nietzsche makes Zarathustra utter the truth in a quasi-prophetic tone. On the other hand, Nietzsche holds that truth, like Being is a fabrication and a lie. Nietzsche's conception of truth is thus diverse and multi-leveled. He conceives of truth as lie, as vital error and as self-deception or illusion. I choose to discuss Nietzsche's concept of truth because it closely relates to the problem I have already alluded to of distinguishing between Nietzsche's positive teachings and his more sceptical or critical teachings.

The critique of the traditional concept of truth belongs to Nietzsche's more sceptical teachings. Nietzsche rejects all theories of truth as adequation or correspondence. For Nietzsche, the fact that the thing can correspond or be adequate to the intellect is insufficient to account for what we understand as truth. Nietzsche has a radically pragmatist understanding of the truth. According to him, we only perceive what our sense organs pick out among the variety in the sensuous world. What is true is thus radically determined for Nietzsche by the nature of our organs. If our senses were structured differently, we would perceive a different truth. Truth is also for Nietzsche a function of will to power. Nietzsche identifies in the Western tradition a will to truth which he explains in terms of his own, allegedly more fundamental, will to power.

There are configurations of truth that last for a while, but inevitably, he believes, they must go under. The changes that occur take place in virtue of two conditions: preservation and enhancement of will to power. There is no change in the configurations of truth unless there is also either a preservation or an enhancement of will to power.

²⁵¹ "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne", KSA I, 880-881.

Enhancement has priority over preservation and there will be change in the configurations of power if will to power is enhanced rather than just preserved.

We can see from this account of the interpenetration of truth and will to power in Nietzsche's thought, that there is no matrix that allows for an explanation of truth in terms of a correspondence or an adequation. Will to power is radically plural.²⁵² Truth as correspondence and as adequation supposes a unity of the intellect. But it is this unity that is radically challenged by Nietzsche. Will to power is not unitary but plural. Nietzsche rejects the ideal of a human or super-human intellect whose unity could be conceived. For Nietzsche the entity called will to power operates within the human intellect and divides this intellect into a plurality of drives and configurations of truth and power.

Truth certainly plays an important role in Nietzsche's philosophy, since it amounts to the preservation of certain interpretations and hence to the preservation of life (through value-positing). However, according to Nietzsche, preservation is not the most important drive of beings understood as will to power. On the contrary, beings always want to enhance and overcome themselves. It is important to understand that Nietzsche's notion of the play of forces does not apply only to the relationship that exists between beings. Rather, the play of forces is both interior and exterior to beings. It governs not only the relationship between beings as such, but it occurs also within every being.

Nietzsche considers Plato's understanding of the relationship between art and truth as essentially flawed, because it is based on a valuation of the supersensible, over and above the sensible. Indeed, we could expand on this claim by adding that, for

²⁵² Heidegger's attempt to think will to power as the Being of beings has been taken to task because it has been accused of being an essentialization of Nietzsche's thought. This critique, mainly elaborated by Müller-Lauter, is valid but it probably neglects the fact that a certain plurification of will to power already occurs in the fourth of Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures. (See Seinsgeschichtliche Bestimmung des Nihilismus in Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche*, Zweiter Band).

Nietzsche, this higher valuation of the supersensible and the positing of categories of reason grounded in the supersensible realm is nihilistic.²⁵³ While Nietzsche's use of the word "nihilism" is in itself a complex issue, in this context it can be taken to mean "against life".²⁵⁴ Accordingly, the Platonic higher valuation of the supersensible realm is against life because it cannot account for life's play of forces that takes place in the sensible realm. Plato's higher valuation of the supersensible rejects the bodily, finite existence of the senses in favor of an ascetic contemplation of the Ideas. In this Platonic move, Nietzsche sees the roots of the Christian world-view that he so strongly criticizes throughout his *oeuvre*. The notion of the supersensible realm is itself a fabrication, which is based on the perspectival aspect of life. This is the case because one perspective among many is *selected, evaluated* and *posited* as above and beyond all other perspectives that life makes available to us. For Nietzsche, insofar as Plato and the tradition have associated truth with the supersensible realm, they have been deceitful fabricators and have misunderstood or disregarded the instinctual and playful aspect of life.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ KSA 13, 11 [99], 2.

²⁵⁴ It is complicated because Nietzsche distinguishes between at least two senses of nihilism: an active nihilism and a passive one. Nietzsche associates passive nihilism with decadence whereas active nihilism is a way of overcoming decadence and going beyond the affection that is constituted by nihilism. Heidegger distinguishes between at least five meanings of nihilism: nihilism proper, classical nihilism, the essence of nihilism, ecstatic nihilism and incomplete nihilism. Nihilism proper seems to be what Heidegger takes to be the position associated with Nietzsche's philosophy to be. Incomplete nihilism follows (logically and chronologically) nihilism proper and consists in the fact that even though the highest values have devalued themselves, there is an attempt made to revalorize them in the same supersensible locus where they had been situated before. In this sense, classical nihilism goes beyond incomplete nihilism and constitutes a type of "completion" and overcoming of that position. Classical nihilism is also associated with Nietzsche's philosophy and corresponds to a way out of nihilism through the transvaluation of values (*Umwertung aller bisherigen Werte*, see *Holzwege*, p.208). The essence of nihilism constitutes Heidegger's own appropriation of nihilism for the purposes of articulating his own project. Nihilism constitutes according to this reading the inner law of history and of the history of Being. The main principle of this history of Being is the fact that in it Being is forgotten and "there is nothing to Being".

²⁵⁵ The higher valuation of the supersensuous is nihilistic for political reasons as well as metaphysical ones : it is against the life of the here and now because it claims that this life can only be understood through principles that transcend it and by the contemplation of something that turns us away from this world. But this also means that we do not need to concern ourselves with the concrete empirical, economic, political situations that we find ourselves in. In short, the Platonic move seems to be a form of escapism but

As I have argued above, Nietzsche's approach to truth seems at times to be pragmatist and naturalistic. Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of living being could not live. It is the value for life that ultimately decides if a given truth is to hold sway. In this sense, truth is related to will to power. A configuration of truth lasts for a certain period of time but this is only temporary and the given configuration will "go under" depending on whether it preserves or enhances will to power. Here the critical and the positive aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy meet. Nietzsche has a notoriously sceptical position vis-à-vis truth, but at the same time he believes that truth is connected to will to power and that will to power is both a physiological, psychological and perhaps (pace Heidegger) an ontological *factum*.

The Western metaphysical tradition has created a connection between the concepts of Being, truth and good. This connection culminates in the medieval unity of *esse*, *verum* and *bonum*. This unity of Being, the true and the good is onto-theological. Onto-theology is the hidden destiny of the West that prepared itself in the Greek world of Plato and Aristotle. With the transposition of the Greek *logos* that culminates in Plotinus' philosophy into Christian theology by Augustine, onto-theo-logy makes one of its most important transitions²⁵⁶. Onto-theology will be re-articulated at least twice: in St-Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* and in Hegel's system of absolute knowledge. Although Heidegger is the first one to have pointed explicitly to the concept of onto-theology, Nietzsche had already problematized the Western metaphysical and rationalistic tradition that culminates in onto-theology.

a dangerous one, since it limits the potentialities of enhancement and growth of an embodied humanity that is grounded and involved in a multiplicity of immanent situations. It might be argued that this is not the case from the Platonic perspective. "Seeing the idea" might precisely be according to this metaphysical perspective the ultimate fulfillment and attainment that can be achieved by human beings.

²⁵⁶ The imputation of the charge of onto-theology to Augustine's philosophy has been challenged by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur.

The belief in the true and in truth-fullness is posited by Christian morality and this emphasis on truth will eventually lead to the deconstruction of Christianity from within itself as truth is transformed, according to Nietzsche, into a vital lie. The positing of truth, of the good and of Being as fundamental values that transcend the here and now is nihilistic. Insofar as Nietzsche combats nihilism through his critique of transcendence, he has already identified the connection between ontology, theology and the *logos*, and already begins to deconstruct onto-theology. The critique of Platonico-Christian transcendence in Nietzsche's philosophy is carried out through the withdrawal of teleology from within Becoming. Platonism and Christianity both devalue the life and Becoming by reducing them to something higher, to a *beyond*. In the *Timaeus*, Plato claims that truth is to opinion, what Being is to Becoming. Thus Becoming is stigmatized as having less value and being less true than Being. Similarly for Christians, the life of the here and now, what we experience in this world of Becoming, has less value, and is only justified in the beyond, in the hereafter, in what traditional Christian doctrine calls Paradise.

The problem of Christian morality and transcendence is related to the problem of the will to truth in Nietzsche. It is in this metaphysical will to truth that value judgments of originate. The will to truth has a Christian origin according to Nietzsche: this will finds its origin in the Christian value of honesty (*Redlichkeit*) that gives birth to the intellectual rigor of the scientific and the over-evaluation of the truth of the metaphysician. But Nietzsche commits certain distortions in his critique of the metaphysical in itself (*an sich*) or transcendence. He unites the Platonic concept of truth and transcendence (the world of Ideas) with Christian psychology. Nietzsche operates a synthesis: according to his famous expression, Christianity is Platonism for the masses. But in this synthesis Nietzsche unites two different tendencies: the Christian desire of

transcendence, the belief in a beyond (the realm or kingdom of God or of heaven) that could replace the *hic et nunc*, and transcendence as it was conceived by Plato, that is, starting from the ideas (the realm of ideas or of the intelligibles).

Nietzsche does not simply invert Platonism as Heidegger affirms sometimes: he operates a synthesis between Platonism and Christianity²⁵⁷ in order to thereafter attempt to invert that synthesis. But to understand Nietzsche's thought well, it must be seen that the critique of Platonism and Christianity cannot be uniform. Christianity attacks the life of the here and now by proposing a beyond capable of redeeming the injustices and iniquities suffered in the here and now. Nietzsche replies that Christianity is against life, that it devaluates the life of the here and now, that it is nihilistic because it posits values that de-value the life of the here and now in favor of a beyond. However, Platonism posits a notion of truth that transcends the here and now. This truth of the Ideas allows us, according to Plato, to understand the life of the here and now. It is only by orienting ourselves towards the world of the Ideas, a world that transcends our world that we can understand our own immanent world. This time, it is in the domain of Platonic epistemology that Nietzsche identifies nihilistic tendencies.

According to him, it is necessary to understand the worldliness of our lower world starting from itself and without referring to transcending entities such as the Platonic ideas. Nietzsche thus accuses Plato in the same way as Christianity of being nihilistic since the ideas are said by Nietzsche to be against life. Every time we attempt to understand the lower world (the here and now, the *ici-bas*, the *Diesseitige*) starting from a transcending entity, we reduce the immanent potentialities of this lower world.

²⁵⁷ Perhaps this synthesis had already been operated by Augustine and by the historical embedding of the language and concepts of Christianity with those of Platonism, but Nietzsche re-articulates the unity between Platonism and Christianity only to radically undo it.

The physiological, animated potential of a living being can only be reduced if an attempt is made to understand it starting from the Platonic Idea. The Platonic Ideas are, in the same sense as the Christian beyond, against life according to Nietzsche. But a distinction must be made between the psychological nihilism of the Christian and the epistemological nihilism of the Platonist, which Nietzsche seems to want to reduce to the same thing.

Nietzsche also criticizes the overvaluation of the notion of the Good in the Platonic and Christian ethics. The values of altruism, self-denial, charity and disinterest are not natural according to Nietzsche but rather against nature and against life. By being against the affects of force, cruelty and violence that take root in will to power, the affects that are positively evaluated by the Christian and Platonic moralities are also correspondingly accused of being nihilistic. The “bad” affects of force, cruelty and violence are at the origin of the bad conscience that is analyzed by Nietzsche in the *Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche hopes to overcome nihilism by, among other things, “naturalizing” the “bad affects” and dissipating the illusion of conscience (in the sense of *Bewusstsein* and *Gewissen*) that exists by exhibiting the sub-stratum of the bad conscience and the bad affects that constitute this conscience.²⁵⁸

Nietzsche does not believe in the existence of identical (*gleiche*) objects in nature. This rejection of the principle of identity is paired with Nietzsche’s sceptical stance towards metaphysical logic. If we take objects in nature (two trees or two flowers), we notice that they are different: there is never an object that is absolutely identical to another. But this presupposition of identity is what (metaphysical) logic functions with: the principle of identity claims that A is A or A is not ~A. From this principle a great

²⁵⁸ *On a Genealogy of Morals, Second Essay*, last paragraphs. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, Random House, New York, 1967.

part of the structure of logic can be developed. Along with the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of identity grounds logic. But this is precisely the opposite of what Nietzsche wants to claim: for him, logic and its categories are not grounded. Nietzsche's naturalism and pragmatism are most apparent here: starting from differences in nature, he attempts to disprove the possibility of grounding logic in an absolute way.

Nietzsche believes that error, injustice and illogicality (*das Unlogische*) are necessary conditions of life. One of the fundamental questions of Nietzsche's philosophy is the question of value. This question of value has repercussions in many domains. Nietzsche fundamentally asks what the value of existence (*Dasein*) is. But the question of value is closely related to morality. Nietzsche famously writes (in a preface to the *Genealogy of Morals*) that he started to enquire about values and then progressed to ask the question of the value of values. Nietzsche's skepticism about metaphysics and metaphysical logic is paired with his critique of morality and of Christian morality.

A strong case could be made to the effect that Nietzsche's fundamental adversary is Christianity and Christian morality, but this being said, Nietzsche is also interested in the more general phenomenon of morality as his interest in Epicurus and the Stoics demonstrates. This is particularly apparent in the works from the middle period *Human, All-too-Human* and *Dawn* in which Nietzsche starts to develop his reflections on morality as the morality of customs. There, the reflection concerns the general phenomenon of morality, and Christianity has not yet been identified as the principal opponent it will become in the later works such as the *Anti-Christ*.

In the middle period of his writings, then, Nietzsche has already thematized Christian morality as the main embodiment of morality. In *Dawn*, Nietzsche focuses on traditional morality. He attacks this traditional morality for two main reasons: traditional morality functions without clarifying the presuppositions on which it rests. Second, the

phenomenon of morality taken in its full generality is something that prevents human beings from attaining greatness or excellence. A theme that will recur in the later writings is the fact that, for Nietzsche, human beings do not act freely. In *Dawn*, the problem of agency and moral responsibility is problematized by Nietzsche from the perspective of a naturalistic view of persons as determined in their actions by fundamental physiological and psychological facts about them.

In Nietzsche's later writings, the problem of agency is recognized as a theological problem. In the *Anti-Christ*, agency and moral responsibility are uncovered by Nietzsche as being grounded in Saint-Paul's doctrine of the last judgment. Men are made equal and free before God so that they can better be made responsible for their actions. But in *Dawn*, Nietzsche is still interested in clarifying the presuppositions of traditional morality.

The phenomenon of morality is central to an understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy and this is perhaps an aspect that is a bit neglected by Heidegger's great interpretation of Nietzsche. It is true that Heidegger does not completely neglect this moral aspect, notably in his discussion of *Rache*.²⁵⁹ The problem of morality is well exemplified in the famous Nietzschean critique of the two worlds: the true (platonic) world and the false world of appearance (Becoming). And of course, the dichotomy that Plato establishes between the true and the apparent worlds is also moral in nature. The idea of the Good has to be preserved from Becoming and the change that occurs in it. The Good does not become but *is*. But once the difference and dichotomy between the true world and the world of appearance is de-constructed, the Good no longer has a place where and in which it can be preserved from change. The Good must become. But this

²⁵⁹ See the passages on the spirit of revenge (*Rache*) in Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra, pp. 221-229, at the end of Heidegger, *Nietzsche 2*.

Becoming of the Good means that it can no longer be purely distinguished from its opposite: evil. Good does not become evil and evil good, but the taking apart of the distinction between the two worlds makes the differentiation and discrimination of good from evil problematic.

We thus see that the moral problem cannot be detached from the purely metaphysical problem. Nietzsche is the first philosopher and this is what his originality consists in to render problematical the connection established by Plato between Being and the Good, between metaphysics and morals. Nietzsche thus overcomes a thinker like Hegel for whom absolute knowledge still consisted in willing the Good. Nietzsche is the first thinker that allows us to think Being “beyond good and evil”. But it is not obvious that for Nietzsche there still is a problem of Being as there was for Plato. For Nietzsche, Being is associated with the idea of the Good and we must according to him give up Being. Nietzsche is a thinker of Becoming and of the innocence of Becoming.

Related to the problem of morality is the problem of values. Valuations are for Nietzsche moral valuations. What stands at the root of a moral value is a moral judgement or a moral estimation. For Nietzsche, values have a natural-evolutionary origin as well as a transcendental meaning. Values have a transcendental component because they are also historical in origin. Values are social-political-metaphysical constructs as well as natural-pragmatic concepts. Through value-positing (*Wertsetzung*) certain evaluations are lifted from the stream of Becoming and posited as if, in Being. This positing is thus a judgment, an evaluation that something is so and so, thus and not otherwise.

The positing is a thesis (*θέσις*), a positioning of something as holding sway over something else. The question that must be asked is what the relationship between value, thesis and *phusis* is. Values are posited (*θέσις*) but they also belong to the realm of nature

(φύσις). There is a double history of values: an ideal history and a genealogical history. The genealogical history focuses on values as natural and as making life possible for a certain species of living beings: the human species. The ideal history focuses on the fact that values have a transcendental, historicized nature. The ideal history of values concerns the fact that when values become the supreme objects of thought, when values become the highest values (the upward movement that is presupposed by the downward slope of nihilism), values de-historicize themselves. Historical values thus have the ability to de-historicize themselves and become the supreme objects of thought.

Nietzsche's effective critique of morality begins in *Human, All-too-Human*. Although there are prefigurations of Nietzsche's stance towards morality in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the critique of morality is not made explicit there. We can recall that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the Dionysian and the Apollonian aspects of art and culture were opposed to a scientific and Socratic culture. The Socratic culture was characterized as decadent with respect to the instinct and affect-driven world of the Dionysian. Socrates is the one that brought about the moral revolution in philosophy. Before his appearance, philosophers such as Anaximander and Thales but also Heraclitus, Parmenides and Pythagoras, preoccupied themselves mostly with the study of nature. This is the reason why Aristotle characterizes them as the *Phusiologoi*.

With Socrates something changes radically. Human beings are no longer concerned so much with understanding what is under the earth and above the skies as they are in understanding what is the Good and the good life. Nietzsche's relationship to Socrates is ambiguous. He recognizes in him a great mind but he claims that this great mind has been granted unto the body of a monster. As Habermas has pointed out,

Nietzsche's relationship to Socrates is highly stylized.²⁶⁰ Nietzsche's emphasis on Socrates' ugliness is a rhetorical device. The technique of the *ad hominem* is effectively used by Nietzsche against Socrates to re-establish the situated nature of ethics and morality. Socrates is precisely the one that had attempted to detach morality from its embodied nature and derive a universal definition of the Good. Now, though, Socrates does not explicitly propose a universal definition of the Good, he does begin the movement that will be completed by Plato of detaching the concept and word "good" from its concrete contexts and universalizing it. In Plato, the Good will become central and the idea of the Good will rule high above all others including Being.

It can be seen from the discussion above that the theme of the critique of morality is already present in *The Birth of Tragedy*. However we maintain that this theme gains clarity and focus only in *Human, All-too-Human*. In the domain of morality, Nietzsche is in a constant struggle with his master Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer had been greatly influenced by Kant's theory of morality that he takes up in a critical way. For Schopenhauer, the motivation of duty that is given by Kant as the only valid motivation depends on an incorrect analysis of the phenomenon of moral motivation. We are not motivated by duty, but by compassion. However, Schopenhauer does not wholly reject the Kantian scheme. He admits that moral motivation does not come from the phenomenal world of appearances, but from the noumenal world of the thing-in-itself.

Schopenhauer re-interprets the Kantian thing-in-itself in a decisive way. For Schopenhauer the thing-in-itself is the will. This positive characterization of the thing-in-itself allows Schopenhauer to qualify moral action. *Pace* Kant, Schopenhauer admits that we cannot be motivated or impelled by phenomenal motives, but only by noumenal ones.

²⁶⁰ See Habermas, J., *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Lecture IV, note 33, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987.

However Schopenhauer asserts that only a compassionate act has moral worth and that this act is an act of the will because it emanates from the thing-in-itself understood as will. Thus Schopenhauer sees a connection between ethics and metaphysics as is clear from the following quote: “It is undeniably recognized by all nations, ages and creeds and even by all philosophers (with the exception of the materialists proper), that the ethical significance of human conduct is metaphysical, in other words, that it reaches beyond this phenomenal existence and touches eternity.”²⁶¹

Nietzsche starts where Schopenhauer leaves us. For Nietzsche, the spiritualization of un-egoistic, compassionate action and its projection upon a metaphysical beyond is unacceptable. Nietzsche writes:

Während Schopenhauer von der Welt der Erscheinung aussagt, dass sie in ihren Schriftzügen das Wesen des Dinges an sich zu erkennen gebe, haben strengere Logiker jeden Zusammenhang zwischen dem Unbedingten, der metaphysischen Welt und der uns bekannten Welt geleugnet: so dass in der Erscheinung eben durchaus nicht das Ding an sich erschiene. Von beiden Seiten scheint mir übersehen, dass es verschiedene irrthümliche Grundauflösungen des Intellectes sind, welche den Grund abgeben, weshalb Ding an sich und Erscheinung in einem unausfüllbaren Gegensatz zu stehen scheinen: wir haben die Erscheinung eben mit Irrthümern so umspinnen, ja sie so mit ihnen durchwebt, dass niemand mehr die Erscheinungswelt von ihnen getrennt denken kann. Also: die üblen, von Anfang an vererbten unlogischen Gewohnheiten des Intellectes haben erst die ganze Kluft zwischen Ding an sich und Erscheinung aufgerissen; diese Kluft besteht nur insofern unser Intellect und seine Irrthümer bestehen.²⁶²

In *Human, All-too-Human* and in *Dawn*, Nietzsche has not yet found his vocabulary but in the later works he will qualify the projection of unegoistic and ethico-moral values on a beyond as nihilistic. As Maudemarie Clark argues, there is a difference

²⁶¹ Schopenhauer, A., *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, translated by E.F. J. Payne as *On the Basis of Morality*, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1965, p.54.

in the positions that Nietzsche adopts in *Human, All-too-Human* and in *Dawn*.²⁶³ In *Human, All-too-Human*, Nietzsche did not admit that such a thing as unselfish, unegoistical action was possible: “Nie hat ein Mensch Etwas gethan, das allein für Andere und ohne jeden persönlichen Beweggrund getan wäre; ja wie sollte er Etwas thun können, das ohne Bezug zu ihm wäre, also ohne innere Nöthigung (welche ihren Grund doch in einem persönlichen Bedürfniss haben müsste) ? Wie vermöchte das ego ohne ego zu handeln ?”²⁶⁴ All action including the love of parents, wife and children was determined as motivated by the enjoyment of the personal passion that it inspired within human beings. This position is close to that of La Rochefoucauld for whom the ground of moral action is falsely attributed to altruistic motives. As LaRochefoucauld puts it “si on croit aimer sa maîtresse pour amour d’elle, on est bien trompé.”²⁶⁵

With *Dawn*, there is a shift in Nietzsche’s position. This shift is exemplified in the following quote:

‘Die Sittlichkeit leugnen’ das kann *einmal* heissen leugnen, dass die sittlichen welche die Menschen angeben, wirklich zu ihren Handlungen getrieben haben-es ist also die Behauptung, dass die Sittlichkeit in Worten bestehe und zur groben und feinen Betrugerei (namentlich Selbstbetrugerei) der Menschen gehöre und vielleicht gerade bei den durch Tugend Berühmtesten am meisten. Sodann kann es heissen: leugnen, dass die sittlichen Urtheile auf Wahrheiten beruhen. Hier wird zugegeben, dass sie Motive des Handelns wirklich sind, dass aber auf diese Weise Irrthümer, als Grund alles sittlichen Urtheilens, die Menschen zu ihren moralischen Handlungen treiben. Dies ist *mein* Gesichtspunkt.²⁶⁶

Here Nietzsche admits that there might be morally motivated action but claims that these motives rest on errors and deceptions.

²⁶² KSA 8, 23 [125].

²⁶³ See *Introduction* to *Dawn*, XX, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

²⁶⁴ MA I, 133, (KSA 2, p.127).

²⁶⁵ La Rochefoucauld, *Réflexions ou Sentences et maximes morales et réflexions diverses*, Maxime 374, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2002.

²⁶⁶ M, 103, (KSA 3, p.91).

The problem of morality is related to the problem of agency and moral responsibility. An important question in Nietzsche scholarship is whether Nietzsche thinks that we are purely determined by our physiological and psychological drives (*Triebe*).²⁶⁷ Nietzsche emphasizes that in order for there to be free action and free will, conscience must be taken as fundamental and determining. But for Nietzsche, conscience is only a layer, a skin that rests on top of the wound that is constituted by the struggle that occurs between many drives. When we become conscious of a drive, it is not we as conscious beings, that become conscious of it. Nietzsche explains:

*dass man überhaupt die Heftigkeit eines Triebes bekämpfen will, steht nicht in unserer Macht ebenso wenig, auf welche Methode man verfällt, ebenso wenig ob man mit dieser Methode Erfolg hat. Vielmehr ist unser Intellect bei diesem Vorgange ersichtlich nur das blinde Werkzeug eines anderen Triebes, welcher ein Rival dessen ist, der uns durch seine Heftigkeit quält: sei es der Trieb nach Ruhe oder die Furcht vor Schande und anderen bösen Folgen oder die Liebe. Während "wir" uns also über die Heftigkeit eines Triebes zu beklagen meinen, ist es im Grunde ein Trieb welcher über ein anderen klagt*²⁶⁸

The terminology of *Triebe* is probably mechanistic and materialistic and this shows the influence on Nietzsche of Lange (*Geschichte des Materialismus*), Ludwig Büchner (*Kraft und Stoff*) and Fechner (*Elemente der Psychophysik*).²⁶⁹

Nietzsche's critique of morality must be understood as an attack on metaphysics as well. The rejection of a metaphysical beyond begins to dawn on Nietzsche through his

²⁶⁷ For a good treatment of *Instinkt* and *Trieb* in Nietzsche (with a comparison with Freud's treatment of *Trieb*) see Assoun, P.-L., *Freud and Nietzsche*, pp.53-69, Translated by Richard L. Collier Jr., Athlone Press, London, 2000.

²⁶⁸ *M*, 109, (*KSA* 3, pp.98-99) .

²⁶⁹ For the connection between Lange and Nietzsche see Stack's book *Lange und Nietzsche* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 1983) especially *Introduction* and *V. Materio-Idealism*. For the connection between Fechner and Nietzsche see same book by Stack, pp. 38, 174, 176, 180, 224, 226. For the connection between Büchner and Nietzsche, see Angèle Kremer-Marietti, *Nietzsche: The Critique of Modern Reason*, pp.87-101, n.50, in *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, and Critical Theory, Nietzsche and the Sciences I*, Edited by Babette E. Babich, in collaboration with Robert S. Cohen, Dordrecht, Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.

explorations of materialism (Lange), physiology and psychology. It is by looking at human moral action that Nietzsche comes to observe conscience and to question the motives that move it to action. The rejection of the metaphysical and the adoption of a pragmatist and naturalistic attitude in his explanation of the moral make Nietzsche a precursor to twentieth century critiques of metaphysics understood as onto-theo-logy. Nietzsche does identify *avant la lettre* the connection between ontology and theology. He does not have a grand historial account to propose like Heidegger of the forgetfulness of Being, but the history of European nihilism has something of a historial structure, as Heidegger himself recognized.

The historial structure of European nihilism is connected to Nietzsche's metaphysics of Becoming. The problem is whether this metaphysics cannot be recuperated by traditional ontology and metaphysics as its other. This thinking of the other is achieved through the concepts of Being and the proper. What has content is for metaphysics is Being and the proper. Becoming is indeterminate and purely formal. Becoming is the in-determinate, the metaphysical infinite or *apeiron* in the Greek sense of the word. To the finitude of Being is opposed, albeit not formally, the in-finitude and non-determination of Becoming. It is this in-finitude in-determinacy that Nietzsche sought to think.

Conclusion

In this section I have sought to present Nietzsche's critique of language, morality and metaphysics. I do not believe that these aspects are essentially distinct in Nietzsche's thought. Rather, the critique of language, of morality and metaphysics is essentially intertwined in Nietzsche's philosophy. I have sought to make this critique explicit from the point of view of the concept of Becoming. Becoming is perspectival and it lacks a *telos*. This perspectival aspect of Becoming allows Nietzsche to claim that when humans try to grasp the world through language, they create a second apparent world. The creation of a distinction between an apparent and real world lies at the basis of the platonic metaphysical theory, according to Nietzsche. It is worthwhile to notice that this distinction between the real and the apparent world is also moral. This is the case because the true world, the world of the idea of the Good, is what is ultimately worth striving for according to Nietzsche's reconstruction of Plato. The *telos* of the apparent world is the true world. Nietzsche eliminates this *telos* from the true world, from the world of Being. But he does not stop there. He goes further by removing the *telos* from within Becoming. When the true world disappears, so does the apparent world.

3.2 The Relationship Between the Problem of Becoming, the Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, Nihilism, and the *Übermensch*

In the following section, I will examine the connection between the concept of Becoming and the more traditional rubrics of Nietzschean thought that are represented by will to power, eternal recurrence, nihilism and the *Übermensch*. It is my thesis that it is fruitful to think through a unity of all the traditional rubrics in terms of the concept of Becoming. Will to power and the eternal recurrence can be seen to constitute a unity as Heidegger has argued. This unity is perhaps the more important one in Nietzsche's thought as I try to argue. But nihilism and the *Übermensch* also cohere with the concepts of will to power and eternal recurrence.

Nihilism is what occurs when the *telos* is removed from Becoming. Up until Nietzsche, and this includes Hegel's thought, an aim had always been posited for thought and for Becoming. This aim is what kept the world of thought from sinking into chaos. But with nihilism a dialectic is established that saps faith in truth and morality. This entails that stability is eliminated from within thought, Becoming and reality. With the concept of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche attempts, partly, to reverse this destabilizing movement of nihilism. Through the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche attempts to find a new *telos* that can replace the *telos* of truth, the Good, and the metaphysical beyond.

The same back and forth between concepts occurs between will to power and eternal recurrence. Will to power destabilizes Becoming and eliminates teleology from within it, but eternal recurrence seeks to preserve and stabilize a point that could perhaps transcend the flux of Becoming. The relationship between the eternal recurrence and Becoming is difficult to understand. Is eternal recurrence a thought about Being or about Becoming? This is not clear. I will try to clarify this issue.

Will to power is a thought that is about Becoming because it posits perspectives of power that are constantly transformed and re-established in the flow of Becoming. Nihilism is what occurs when we realize that perhaps there is no such thing as Being (that Being is a fiction). The *Übermensch*, is Nietzsche's original perspective on Becoming, the possibility to find a centre within Becoming, something to strive for. As I will try to argue, these traditional Nietzschean rubrics can all be re-thought in terms of the concept of Becoming.

Eternal recurrence can also be conceived as the synthesis between the temporality of Being (eternity) and of Becoming (moment). This synthesis affords the thought of recurrence a dialectical quality that is not present in an obvious way in Nietzsche's other concepts. Heidegger writes in connection with freedom, understood as a relationship between Being and Becoming:

Das Wesen des Seienden ist das Werden, aber das Werdende ist und hat Sein erst in der schaffende Verklärung. Das Seiende und das Werdende sind zusammengeschlossen in dem Grundgedanken, dass das Werdende ist, indem es *seiend wird* und *werdend ist* im Schaffen. Dieses Seiendwerden aber wird zum werdenden Seienden im ständigen Werden des Festgewordenen als seines Erstarrten zum Festgemachten als der befreienden Verklärung.²⁷⁰

The thought of eternal recurrence represents a dialectic of contingency and necessity. The thought of eternal recurrence allows each individual that is capable of this thought to understand his particular life as a necessary part of a greater totality, of a *cosmos*. Each moment out of which the life of an individual is constituted, including the most difficult moments (and perhaps these moments more so than others since they lead to the thought of eternal recurrence by forcing us to go through the experience of

²⁷⁰ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche I*, pp.465-466 (*Nietzsche*, Vol.3, pp.200-201).

nihilism) are felt and understood as necessary parts of his self, of what he is and what he has become.

The experiences of a subject return, recur and this happens in part in a way that is independent of the will of this subject: the flow of experiences returns. But there is also a subjective component that is associated with the thought of eternal recurrence, the “also wollte Ich es” (thus I willed it) that inverts the temporal flow and its “es war” (there was). A subjective will wants to invert the experiences that occur for a subject of this will in a contingent way and this will wills the necessity of these experiences by willing their return. But this is only possible if there is an identity between these two movements: the flow of contingent experiences and the conscious and necessary will that inverts the contingency of the flow of experiences. It is clear that in order to think these two movements together we cannot think them as essentially different from one another. There is an identity that is pre-supposed from the start between these two movements. This constitutes the hidden “Hegelianism” (at least with respect to the eternal recurrence: it is clear that in general Nietzsche is not a Hegelian but rather overcomes Hegelianism) of Nietzsche that Heidegger has sought to emphasize in his Nietzsche lectures. In the end however, Heidegger’s claim constitutes a strategy of reducing Nietzsche to Hegel, in order to make room for his own overcoming of both thinkers.

Freedom is constituted by the fusion of Being and Becoming. Because of the difference between Being and Becoming, a certain form of freedom can be established. In order for freedom to exist, there is a need for things to be stable in existence (Being) but also for the possibility of change in the world (Becoming). Being and Becoming are fused together yet remain differentiated. The fusion or imbrication of Being in Becoming is not an act of subjective will but it must also be that in a sense. This is the case because, as an act of subjectivity, the imbrication of Being in Becoming could find an immanent site

from which it could make itself possible. Becoming runs and passes its course.

Becoming can be conceived (not without a certain reduction) as the flow of subjective experiences that exists for a conscience. In order for Being to be, this subjective conscience must will the return of experiences. This is how Heidegger understands eternal recurrence of the same by claiming that it is: "The supreme triumph of the metaphysics of the will that eternally wills its own willing."²⁷¹ But this understanding is insufficient. There is a subjective moment of eternal recurrence that is a moment of permanentization/constantification of Becoming. This might perhaps lead to a psychologization of the will. However, it is important to understand that insofar as the will pertains to time and to Becoming, the will is conceived metaphysically by Nietzsche.

The moment of permanentization/constantification of Becoming corresponds to will to power, although in an undetermined way. However there is an objective side to the thought of recurrence that is completely independent of the will and that makes of the thought of recurrence a certain fatality for all conscience and all will that could correspond to it : the Whole returns. It is only starting from this return that the Whole can have Being. Nietzsche is categorical about this : whether we will the eternal recurrence or not, this recurrence occurs anyway, independently of our will.

I believe there is support for my interpretation if we turn away from the passages that talk directly of the eternal recurrence and consider Nietzsche's philosophy in its totality. This philosophy taken in its totality speaks of Becoming. The Nietzschean "system" (if it is at all legitimate to speak in these terms) does not possess a principle of transcendence. This principle of transcendence can be understood as the ability to achieve independence from historical determinations. This is perhaps very conscious and willed on Nietzsche's part but it remains a great aporia of his system and we may criticize

²⁷¹ Heidegger, M., *What is Called Thinking*, Harper-Row, New York, 1968, p.104.

him in a legitimate way in this case. However, this transcendence is not something that I superimpose on the Nietzschean conceptuality and text : the transcendence I am referring to exists implicitly in the specific *loci* of Nietzsche's *corpus*. It remains to be resolved whether Nietzsche's *mens auctoris*, his intended meaning on the question of transcendence, is relevant to this issue or not. With Gadamer and Heidegger, we might want to say that the *Sache* of Nietzsche's text speaks of transcendence even though Nietzsche never had any intention to do so.

There are hints that show us that will to power and eternal recurrence of the same are thoughts that are strongly connected for Nietzsche. One of these hints is aphorism 1067 of the of the collection of fragments that became known as the *Will to Power*, in which Nietzsche claims that "Diese Welt ist die Wille zur Macht und nichts anders». In an older version of this aphorism Nietzsche had stated the following:

ein Ring guten Willens ist, auf eigener alter Bahn sich immer um sich und nur um sich zu drehen: diese meine Welt, - wer ist hell genug dazu, sie zu schauen, ohne sich Blindheit zu wünschen ? Stark genug, diesem Spiegel seine Seele entgegen zu halten ? Seinen eignen Spiegel dem Dionysos-Spiegel ? Seine eigne Lösung dem Dionysios-Räthsel ? Und wer das vermöchte, müsste er dann nicht noch mehr thun ? Dem Ring der Ringe sich selber anverloben ? Mit dem Gelöbniss der eignen Wiederkunft ? Mit dem Ringe der ewigen Selbst-Segnung, Selbst-Bejahung ? Mit dem Willen zum Wieder-und-noch-ein-Mal-Wollen ? Zum zurück-Wollen aller Dinge, die je gewesen sind ? Zum hinaus-Wollen zu Allem, was je sein muss ? Wisst ihr nun was mir diese Welt ist ? Und was ich will wenn ich diese Welt-will ?²⁷²

It can clearly be deduced that when Nietzsche writes: "Do you know what this world is to me? And what I am willing when I will *this* world?" he is referring to the eternal recurrence of the same. The rhetorical structure of the passage is similar to the later version of the aphorism which talks about will to power so that we may assume that will to power came to replace eternal recurrence as the fundamental *factum* that characterizes the

world for Nietzsche. Thus the two thoughts could be taken as practically interchangeable in the weight that Nietzsche accorded them for his thought.

Will to power is a concept that Nietzsche uses in an explicit way to show the inexistence of free will (but an un-free will is not a consequence of the inexistence of free will : Nietzsche does not believe in a free will just as he does not believe in an un-free will. He only believes in strong wills and weak wills, as he asserts in *Beyond Good and Evil*.) The entity that Nietzsche calls will to power is operational within subjectivity and this precludes the will to will a single thing or to will in a single direction. However, this effect of will to power is counter-balanced by the concept of *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's thought. The *Übermensch* is the goal of the will that only wills the *Übermensch* and its advent.

The thought of eternal recurrence plays a crucial role as a counter-movement to nihilism. The thought of eternal recurrence is said to throw the one who thinks it into a great abyss because of its depth. If everything we undertake as finite human beings will repeat itself again and again, then everything seems to occur in vain. If the same thing repeats itself infinitely and indefinitely then everything is indifferent. The fatalism of eternal recurrence seems to block all possibility of establishing a center, of establishing values that can serve as principles for life. Eternal recurrence seems to make everything vain and indifferent. But this tiredness with life, the devaluation of all values is in fact only an illusion. Against the great illusion of nihilism, a strong thought is necessary.

Nihilism as understood by Nietzsche has at least two aspects. There is an individual and psychological aspect that is conceived as the affection of the will of an individual that cannot will life. The will thus becomes a decadent will. The other aspect is the more historical aspect of nihilism identified by Heidegger. Conceived in this way

²⁷² KSA 14, 727.

nihilism is the motor of History. However, it can be observed that this movement is the inverse of the movement of actualization and progression of freedom in History proclaimed by Hegel. But if nihilism has a history and a development it is not the exact inverse of the Hegelian movement of freedom through History. Nihilism lacks the teleological nature of Hegel's understanding of historical Becoming.

For Nietzsche, "in einer ganz bestimmten Ausdeutung, in der christlich-moralischen, steckt der Nihilismus."²⁷³ The moral-Christian interpretation of existence is still operational in Hegel's philosophy. History as *telos* and as narrative possessing a beginning and an end is an Aristotelian-Christian heritage. Aristotle did not possess a concept of history comparable to the modern one but he certainly possessed the concept of *entelecheia* and (*en-*)*telos*. It is difficult to reduce the notion of teleological history to its Christian origins. But my thesis is that the notion of a teleological historical narrative makes its appearance in the history of ideas with the advent of Christianity.²⁷⁴

Thus, Nietzsche's thesis is precisely that the kind of narrative history or theory of history that is projected onto the life of each individual in order to explain the meaning of each individual life has become untenable. For Nietzsche, Christian morality self-destructs because of the value that it accords to truth. It is the faith in truth and in truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) that is presupposed by Christian morality that leads to nihilism. The belief in a super-sensible ideal and in the truth that is attached to this ideal results ultimately in a non-truth and a transformation of the truth into a lie. For Nietzsche this constitutes the culmination of decadence and nihilism. Even though Nietzsche

²⁷³ KSA 12, 2 [127].

²⁷⁴ Umberto Eco writes to cardinal Carlo Maria Martini in a letter of March 1995: "not only Augustine, but the Church Fathers in their totality offer to the world the idea of History as a forward march, an idea that was foreign to the pagan world until then. Even Hegel and Marx were influenced by this fundamental idea, followed by Teilhard de Chardin. Christianity has invented history...." Carlo Maria Martini, Umberto Eco, *Belief or Non-belief?*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2000.

considers that a continuous and teleological historical narrative is impossible, it still is the case that nihilism is constituted by the historical event that consists in the fact that the Christian-moral interpretation of existence and of History (which could be construed to culminate in Hegel's philosophy) has become untenable. Nietzsche also calls this historical event the history of which was to be constituted according to him by the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the "death of God".

One of the most famous passages in which Nietzsche interprets the "death of God" is in *The Gay Science*, aphorism 125²⁷⁵. There are other important references in the Nietzschean *corpus* such as the *Zarathustra* Prologue and many passages in the *Anti-christ*. What is amazing however, in *The Gay Science*, and this testifies to Nietzsche's ambivalence vis-à-vis atheism, is the fact that the story that is told by the madman (*der tolle Mensch*) who announces prophetically the death of God, is not, *in fact*, so different from the Christian story of the crucifixion. Formally, the story is similar insofar as it is humans who kill a "living" God not unlike Christ. Of course, this is a parodistic repetition by Nietzsche, but it does not rule out an unconscious or tacit acceptance of some of the original elements of Christian story.

The story of the death of God is related to Nietzsche's notion of the dialectic and of nihilism. Nihilism, the positing of God's existence and of a religious morality are dialectically interconnected. Initially it is morality itself that cultivates truthfulness as an in-itself, something that transcends the here and now. But this will to truth of the moral man turns against morality itself.²⁷⁶ Truth becomes a lie when the moral man realizes that truth conceived as an ideal and as a beyond passes judgment on life. In fact nihilism

²⁷⁵ KSA 3, pp.480-482.

²⁷⁶ KSA 12, 5 [71], 2.

(as psychological state) can also be characterized by the fact that the meaning of events, of the world and of life is amiss. Nietzsche speaks of it in this way:

Jener Sinn könnte gewesen sein: “die Erfüllung” eines sittlichen höchsten Kanons in allem Geschehen, die sittliche Weltordnung; oder die Zunahme der Liebe und Harmonie im Verkehr der Wesen; oder die Annäherung an einen allgemeinen Glücks-Zustand; oder selbst das Losgehen auf einen allgemeinen Nichts-Zustand - ein Ziel ist immer noch ein Sinn. Das Gemeinsame aller diese Vorstellungsarten ist, dass ein Etwas durch ein Prozess selbst erreicht werden soll: und nun begreift man, das mit dem Werden *nichts* erzielt, *nichts* erreicht wird...²⁷⁷

Nihilism, inasmuch as it constitutes a disappearing of the true world as a *Hinterwelt*, is a liberation. The disappearance of a world of Being frees Becoming. Being as a supersensible value contributes to a moralisation and an ontologization of existence and of History. With the acknowledgement that Being corresponds to nothingness and to negation, the nihilistic conscience is transformed into a free will-for-Becoming. Will to power as will to nothingness becomes free in order to will Becoming. This freeing of the will is dialectical insofar as the supreme will to power is «to imprint onto Becoming the character of Being».

If the old values, being, unity, goal, supersensible, morality, are decadent, this is only from the historical perspective in which we are situated and that is constituted by nihilism. The positing of values is always, and this is not dependent on the historical context of this positing, an act of freedom. This act of freedom is not only the act of a subjectivity. The positing of values is a subjective act but the content of what is posited as value is not subjective; but it precedes the subject-object division. Values are posited and obtain Being and this is true even of the value “Being”.

²⁷⁷ KSA 13, 11 [99].

But the values posited by Nietzsche will one day become decadent. This is due to the nature of the historical process that posits values, lets them hold sway and rule for a given period of time and then destroys them. For example, the founding values of Western philosophy that are represented by the Platonic philosophy dominate and rule for a while before they are dethroned by other values or systems. This problem of how historical systems and values from other epochs can still be valid or still have value across epochs is tantamount to the problem of historicism. It is clear that there is no flow of systems that harmoniously rule and then become simply de-throned by other ruling systems. The historical reality is much more intricate than that, and two systems can fight for supremacy, one that is much older and one that is contemporary. This problem of ruling values and of the value of values is intrinsically related to the problem of historicism, which we will address in detail in the third chapter of the first part of this dissertation.

Man, as the being that represents and posits values, is conceptualized as the fulfilment of the absolute and consummate subjectivity of will to power. But the notion of man is radicalized in itself when it is thought in terms of the will to power. As the pure exercise of will to power, man becomes what Nietzsche calls the *Übermensch*. Thus, the *Übermensch* is the man that realizes that each one of his actions, as contingent as it may seem is necessary and filled with meaning. What seems to distinguish the *Übermensch* from the man who precedes him is the realization that necessity, historical and existential, is of his own making. The *Übermensch* finally acknowledges and realizes the divinity that is potentially present within him. As Nietzsche puts it:

All die Schönheit und Erhabenheit, die wir den wirklichen und eingebildeten Dingen geliehen haben, will ich zurückfordern als Eigentum und Erzeugnis des Menschen: als seine schönste Apologie. Der Mensch als Dichter, als Denker, als Gott, als Liebe, als Macht-: oh über seine königliche Freigiebigkeit, mit der er die

Dinge beschenkt hat, um sich zu verarmen und sich elend zu fühlen! Das war bisher seine grösste Selbstlosigkeit, dass er bewunderte und anbetete und sich zu verbergen wusste, dass er es war, der Das geschaffen hat, was er bewunderte.²⁷⁸

It is only within the perspective opened by the concept of the *Übermensch* that the thought of eternal recurrence becomes sustainable. This is true because the overcoming that is intrinsic to the thought of eternal recurrence must find a focus, a fulfilment in the world and not in a beyond as it was the case with the preceding metaphysical and religious systems.

Deleuze has forcefully argued, that the eternal recurrence is a selective and transformative thought.²⁷⁹ I do not fully agree with this view of the thought of recurrence. I believe that eternal recurrence is transformative but, this transformation is the lot of every man by the mere fact that he is human. There is evidence however, that Nietzsche himself believed eternal recurrence to be selective (*auswählendes*).²⁸⁰ According to this reading, the difficulty of such a thought makes a selection as to *who* is capable of thinking this thought. It only allows the high-minded, the noble nature to absolutely affirm his apparently absurd and contingent existence through the affirmation of the recurrence of every single act-experience as necessary. The “weak”, the “sickly”, the proponents of the slave morality are those who succumb or are themselves transformed and transfigured into something higher when faced with the possibility of the return.

But why should the focus and the fulfillment of the transformation be the *Übermensch*? This is the case because the *Übermensch* is the pure exercise of will to power. The depth of the eternal recurrence is that this thought reinvests with

²⁷⁸ Nietzsche, F., Epigram zum Buch II der *Wille zur Macht*, 1887-1888. I could not locate this citation in the KSA.

²⁷⁹ See Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, PUF, Paris, 1973, Chapter II, Section 14.

transcendence the immanent world. The *Übermensch* is the locus of an inversion that allows the world of Being to be transformed into a world of Becoming. But the logic of return and recurrence needs a culmination and a guideline. This is offered by the concept of the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* offers a stable direction and a goal towards which the eternal recurrence may progress. The concept of *Übermensch* offers a goal that does not resemble the Christian and Platonic beyond. The *Übermensch* seems to be an ideal (although we know that Nietzsche detested this word) towards which man could tend but that would be situated in the concrete and immanent world. This concept of the *Übermensch* thus participates in Nietzsche's project of an inversion of Platonism.

The *Übermensch* is another way in which Nietzsche attempts to think transcendence and in this way the concept of the *Übermensch* possesses an essential link to the concept of the eternal recurrence of the same. If will to power abolishes the transcendence of the supersensible world, then the *Übermensch* preserves the possibility of transcendence although in a horizontal, non-vertical plane of immanence.

On the one hand, the *Übermensch* is the inheritor of the bourgeois-socialist notion of progress inasmuch as it posits a form of teleology within the essence of man: man can improve himself, he can go beyond his immediate conditions, historical and social and attain to a finality, to an *eschaton*. On the other hand, the notion of *Übermensch* is attached in an inherent way to the malleability of man that is made possible by modern science. Man is capable of manipulating himself and the nature that surrounds him: he can split the atom, he can understand and manipulate his genetic code and he can manipulate (and perhaps create) his emotions through the applications of psychopharmacology.

²⁸⁰ KSA 10, 24 [8].

The notion of *Übermensch* is attached in an essential way to the concepts of will to power, eternal recurrence and nihilism. The *Übermensch* overcomes nihilism by willing the eternal recurrence of will to power. The will frees itself through the thought of eternal recurrence for the possibility of the *Übermensch*, which is a pure possibility insofar as he represents the pure powering of will to power. Certain commentators have spoken of the fact that the *Übermensch* might represent an *Aufhebung* of man as he has existed hitherto.²⁸¹ This way of putting the problem seems to distort Nietzsche's philosophy by misunderstanding the radicalism of the thought of the *Übermensch*.

The relation of the *Übermensch* to the eternal return of the same can be understood starting from the categories of possibility and actuality. The eternal recurrence of the same is a circular movement that frees possibilities. Through the eternal circularity of return new possibilities are liberated or freed. Man projects himself onto these possibilities which constitute the possibility of a liberation that must procure the actualization of the *Übermensch*. Thus, we see that the *Übermensch* has deeper ties to the concept of eternal recurrence than to the concept of will to power. This is not one of my main theses, but some groundwork has already been laid down by Heidegger and Muller-Lauter who have attempted to conceptualize the fact that the thought of the *Übermensch* is rooted in the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same. This is clear in

²⁸¹ "In the first place the constrictive and reductive perspective of the history of metaphysics imposes the point of view that the ideas of Nietzsche establish themselves on the basis of an inversion-conservation (*Aufhebung*) of the metaphysical positions that immediately precede him in time or, that, according to Heidegger, of Hegel. The *Übermensch* will have to be understood, after that, as an *Aufhebung* of the Hegelian thought of the absolute subject."

"En primer lugar, la perspectiva constrictiva y reductora de la historia de la metafísica impone el punto de vista de que las ideas de Nietzsche se establecen sobre la base de una inversión-conservación (*Aufhebung*) de las posiciones metafísicas que le preceden inmediatamente en el tiempo, o sea, según Heidegger, de las de Hegel. El superhombre deberá entenderse, pues, como *Aufhebung* del pensamiento del sujeto absoluto de Hegel.

Diego Sanchez Meca, *Perspectivas actuales de interpretación del Übermensch nietzscheano*, Publicado en ER. *Revista de filosofía*, Sevilla, no. 14, 1999/1.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, where Zarathustra is both the teacher of the *Übermensch* and of the eternal recurrence of the same.

The man of the present is a representation of actuality. The *Übermensch* is pure possibility as pure exercise of will to power. But the possibility of actualization of the *Übermensch* is made possible or facilitated through the permanentization of Becoming that is represented by the eternal recurrence of the same. The eternal recurrence frees actual man from his actuality and frees him for the pure possibilities represented by the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* as agent of the overcoming of nihilism, must reconfigure the relationship between Being and Becoming, between actuality and possibility.

Nihilism is characterized by the immediate disappearance of Being into Becoming. The *Übermensch* is what makes possible a Becoming that has been purified of all Being. The inversion of Being as idea (Plato) into Being as value (Nietzsche) presupposes the disappearance and abolition of Being as supersensible, and the structuring value of the here and now. But the *Übermensch* represents the possibility of a new position and creation of values.

I have tried to show in this section that the basic rubrics of Nietzsche's thought, will to power, eternal recurrence, nihilism and *Übermensch* can be made to cohere in terms of the concept of Becoming. Other rubrics attempt to remove teleology from within Becoming. This is the case with will to power and nihilism. Some other rubrics like eternal recurrence and the *Übermensch* attempt to re-establish a form of transcendence once the world of Being has been abolished (this abolition happens fully according to Nietzsche, only in his philosophy²⁸²). It is for this reason that these two last rubrics, eternal recurrence and the *Übermensch*, are far more complex. Eternal

²⁸² The best example of where Nietzsche argues for such a belief is the famous passage of the "History of an Error".

recurrence seems to possess a *telos* and this *telos* is the repetition or recurrence that must be eternally willed. As to the *Übermensch*, he seems to be a *telos* that is radically placed within Becoming rather than in the beyond. Thus our examination has complexified our thesis. On the one hand, Nietzsche, through the rubrics of will to power and nihilism removes a certain form of teleology (an objective teleology perhaps) from within Becoming and on the other hand, through the rubrics of eternal recurrence and the *Übermensch* he re-establishes a form of teleology but by referring only to a world of Becoming and no longer to a world of Being.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show that all of the main rubrics of Nietzsche's thought (will to power, eternal recurrence of the same, nihilism, *Übermensch* and "death of God") can be related to the concept of Becoming. Some of these rubrics are more dynamic and they emphasize Becoming more than the others: this is the case with will to power, nihilism and the "death of God". But even the more static rubrics such as the eternal recurrence of the same and the *Übermensch*, are inherently related to the concept of Becoming. In fact it is my thesis that the eternal recurrence of the same and the *Übermensch* can best be thought of in terms of the concept of Becoming. What returns in the eternal recurrence is the pure and impermanent flux of Becoming. Even though it is possible to stamp Becoming with the character of Being, the stamping is a *Fälschung*.

Similarly the *Übermensch* is characterized by Nietzsche as being in a perpetual movement of *self-overcoming*. This self-overcoming occurs in the configurations of force-centers, power-centers and power-wills that constitute the constellations of Becoming. Thus, all the principal, metaphysical rubrics of Nietzsche's thought can be re-articulated in terms of the key-concept of Becoming.

3.3 Nietzsche, Becoming and Historicism

In this section, I will look at how Nietzsche approaches the problem of history and historicism. To do so, I will confront Nietzsche's theses about history with Gadamer's. I think this is worthwhile endeavor because Gadamer's *Truth and Method* has made decisive contributions to the understanding of historicism and history in general. But how does this relate to the main thesis of my dissertation, namely that Nietzsche removes teleology from within Becoming? I will show in this section that by removing teleology from within Becoming, Nietzsche also removes teleology from within history. Nietzsche achieves this by providing a genealogical and genetic account of history that rejects the idea of history as an essential process or essentialized Becoming. Nietzsche, and this constitutes his originality with respect to Hegel (and perhaps with respect to Gadamer as well, for whom the historical horizons are ultimately dialectically subsumed into a unified, essential horizon), removes the *telos* of reason from within history.

It is Gadamer's thesis that Nietzsche's philosophy did not grow up on the soil of German Idealism as much as in reaction to German historicism.²⁸³ Nietzsche discusses historicism in his famous *Second Untimely Meditation (Zweite Unzeitgemässene Betrachtung)*. There, Nietzsche identifies history and the study of history as an illness that prevents man from acting. Action is opposed to knowledge as in Hamlet's classical dilemma.²⁸⁴ To know the state and true nature of Being entails being opposed to the action that is associated with Becoming. As Nietzsche puts it in the *Birth of Tragedy*:

In diesem Sinne hat der dionysische Mensch Ähnlichkeit mit Hamlet: beide haben einmal einen wahren Blick in das Wesen der Dinge gethan, sie haben *erkannt*, und es ekelt sie zu handeln; denn ihre Handlung kann nichts am ewigen Wesen der Dinge ändern, sie

²⁸³ See footnote 229 in *Wahrheit und Methode*, p.130.

²⁸⁴ "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; and thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought; And enterprises of great pith and moment, With this regard, their currents turn awry, And lose the name of action." Shakespeare, W., *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, Act III, Scene I.

empfinden es als lächerlich, dass ihnen zugemuthet wird, die Welt, die aus den Fugen ist, wieder einzurichten. Die Erkenntnis tötet das Handeln...²⁸⁵

History and knowledge of history are opposed to action because in order to act, man has to forget. Essential to acting is an ability to forget one's past. Nietzsche describes in this way a man who would have lost the ability to forget:

Denkt euch das äußerste Beispiel, einen Menschen, der die Kraft zu vergessen gar nicht besäße, der verurtheilt wäre, überall ein Werden zu sehen: ein Solcher glaubt nicht mehr an sein eigenes Sein, glaubt nicht mehr an sich, sieht alles in bewegte Punkte auseinander fließen und verliert sich in diesem Strome des Werdens...²⁸⁶

For Nietzsche, acting is a projection onto Becoming and Becoming in its turn represents the immediacy of the moment as opposed to the sediments of historical Being. In order to project oneself onto Becoming, one must forget his past and the weight with which the past bears down, on the present and throw himself into the present moment.

The problem of historicism is related to the awareness that we have of being historical beings through and through. The two extreme positions of Dilthey and Nietzsche can be contrasted when trying to understand history. Dilthey approached history through his concept of *Verstehen*. History would have to be understood according to Dilthey as the expression of a lived interiority. This 'expression' as given in the hermeneutic of *Verstehen* is to be contrasted to what Dilthey calls *Erklären* and that represents the mode of understanding that is dominant in the natural sciences.

Ultimately however, Dilthey falls back on an objectivistic understanding of both history and the human sciences. This understanding tends to eliminate the radical historicity that characterizes the hermeneutical experience of history. The problem of history is reduced by Dilthey to the search for a method of objectification of the understanding of history. Nietzsche's generalized perspectivism can be contrasted to

²⁸⁵ GT, 7, (KSA I, 56-57).

Dilthey's positivism. Thus, this perspectivism is understood in relation to the problem of historicism. The aporia or contradiction generated by the problem of historicism can be expressed as follows. Human beings are aware that they are historical and that they live in different historical epochs. But the understanding of different historical epochs can only be achieved through the deforming lens of our own present epoch. This means that we can have no objective understanding of past historical epochs, since we only perceive them through the lens of our present. Put this way, historicism can be understood to lead to relativism. The dilemma can also be put otherwise. We are historical beings, therefore we inhabit a particular historical epoch but, in virtue of inhabiting that particular historical epoch, we have no access to the past epochs that are constitutive of our historicity.

Another important way of putting the problem of historicism is related to Nietzsche and the perspectivism that characterizes his philosophy. Each historical epoch affords a perspective on the past, but there is no objective standpoint from which to reconcile all perspectives and gain an objective view of history. It is important to see that Nietzsche's view of history is consistent with his skepticism vis-à-vis metaphysical truth. For Nietzsche there is no truth but only interpretations. Infinity is for Nietzsche the infinite play of interpretations. Becoming is shot through not with truth but with interpretation. So Nietzsche's position in relation to history is comparable to his position in relation to traditional metaphysics.

History is presented as Becoming in the last great attempt to understand it philosophically which is represented by Hegel's Idealism. But Hegel's Becoming is understood as processuality, development and teleological movement. Nietzsche

²⁸⁶ *HL*, I (*KSA* I, 250).

probably has Hegel in mind when he writes in the *Second Untimely Meditation* about the historical man:

Wir wollen sie die historischen Menschen nennen; der Blick in die Vergangenheit drängt sie zur Zukunft hin, feuert ihren Muth an, es noch länger mit dem Leben aufzunehmen, entzündet die Hoffnung, dass das Rechte noch komme, dass das Glück hinter dem Berge sitze, auf den sie zuschreiten. Diese historischen Menschen glauben, dass der Sinn des Daseins im Verlaufe eines Prozesses immer mehr an Licht kommen werde, sie schauen nur deshalb rückwärts, um an der Betrachtung des bisherigen Prozesses die Gegenwart zu verstehen und die Zukunft heftiger begehren zu lernen; sie wissen gar nicht wie unhistorisch sie trotz aller ihrer Historie denken und handeln, und wie auch ihre Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte nicht im Dienste der reinen Erkenntnis sondern des Lebens steht.²⁸⁷

A look at Nietzsche's and Hegel's philosophies shows clearly that history comes down to the old metaphysical problem of Being and Becoming. History is not possible without the movement of Becoming, but there are sediments, there are necessities: the flow of Becoming is constantified in Being. The place where the dialectical play of Being and Becoming occurs is precisely this History that we have *been*, that we have *become*, and that we do not cease to *become*.

For Nietzsche, history is archaic, critical or monumental but it is also genealogical. Genealogy consists in the study of origins. The origin of history is not hypostasized but studied concretely in terms of its natural origins. The struggle between the master and the slave moralities is to a certain extent the motor of history. The problem is that there is more than one motor of history. To want to understand history solely in terms of a larger, essential process that occurs within it is already to distort history for Nietzsche. Another possible motor of history could be nihilism as Heidegger has claimed. But the problem with this description of nihilism is that it is part of the Heideggerian strategy which consists in claiming that Nietzsche merely inverts the

progress and actualization of freedom in history that is characteristic of Hegel's Idealism by proposing a negative development that may be called the history of nihilism. This Heideggerian strategy is ultimately unsatisfactory and untenable.

Historicism leads to contradiction and paradox. Contradiction plays a central role in Nietzsche's philosophy whether in relation to his understanding of history or not. Nietzsche interprets contradiction as the real that ironizes itself by showing itself and hiding itself simultaneously. In this way, contradiction functions differently in Nietzsche's philosophy than in Hegel's. For Hegel, contradiction is the seriousness of the labor of the concept. It is the motor that propels history forward. For Nietzsche there is no forward movement, no absolute progress of reason and freedom in History. Every time we become aware of a progress, this progress eludes us in a way that is both ironical and tragic.

Some have argued that the paradox that characterizes historicism leads to its self-destruction. The problem with historicism is that even though it recognizes the organicity of historicity it still attempts to find a perfectly objective grounding for its understanding of the past. The question of historicism can be reformulated as the question of whether history elevates a claim to truth. For Nietzsche, the question is whether history can serve life. We see here, prefigured, a theme that is familiar for Nietzsche: the greater importance of life and the value of an evaluation for life than of truth. Thus, Nietzsche's pragmatism and naturalism is present in his analyses of history. History is for Nietzsche the history of moral values.

Nietzsche does not explicitly apply the concept of force to his understanding of history but the translation of this concept into the realm of history is perhaps appropriate. It is probable that Nietzsche's usage of the concept of play of forces is owed to Fechner

²⁸⁷ *HL*, I, (*KSA* I, 255).

(*Elemente der Psychophysik*) or to Büchner (*Kraft und Stoff*). In this sense, Nietzsche is thinking of forces as physiological and physical entities that have a material application. But the play of forces is also what constitutes the essence of will to power and in this sense these forces can be taken as a metaphysical substrate as well as a material one. Heidegger's reluctance to explain will to power in terms of the play of forces might indicate his awareness of the materialistic implications of such a concept.

But in Ranke's and Hegel's explanations of history, forces are clearly understood as spiritual and metaphysical entities. In Hegel force is related to its exteriorization. This exteriorization is in turn related to interiorization. Hegel shows that this play of exteriorization and interiorization that is the essence of self-consciousness can be subsumed under the concept of life. Interiorization (*Er-innerung*) is given priority in this description of self-consciousness and life, but the relationship between exteriorization and interiorization is nevertheless dialectical.

For Nietzsche also, life is related to force but Nietzsche's analysis of force does not lead to a dialectic of life. The interiorization of force that is the essence of life for Hegel is deconstructed by Nietzsche. The interior interiorization and the exterior exteriorization of force cannot be seized dialectically. Rather, the essence of force precedes and destroys the still metaphysical opposition between interior and exterior, between inside and outside. History is understood in historicism as something that has meaning and that makes sense. There is a unity, a continuity, and a necessity of history. For Nietzsche, these three grounding concepts of the unity, continuity and necessity of history have become problematical. Historicism is polemicized in Nietzsche's *Second Untimely Meditation*. At the same time it may be argued that Nietzsche is himself still influenced by historicism in that *Meditation*. It is not until Nietzsche reaches his more mature concept of history in texts such as *Human, All-too-Human* and in the *Genealogy*

of *Morals* that Nietzsche may be said to have freed himself from the aporias of historicism. The basic problem of historicism consists for Nietzsche in the relationship between history and life. If history is bound to serve life, it must not create mere scholars and scientists of the historical process. History must educate man to be fully himself and to be both a man of action and a contemplative being. History and life must be both intertwined in a dynamic interaction.

Hans-Georg Gadamer has been an acute scholar of historicism. It has been argued that he was both one of the last representatives of historicism as well as a great polemicist against historicism. For these reasons, a comparison between the theses of Nietzsche and Gadamer concerning history is appropriate here. The main difference between Gadamer's understanding of history and Nietzsche's may be seen when we examine what fundamentally characterizes Gadamer's hermeneutical project: the historical conscience and conscience of the history of efficiency (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*). The appearance of the historical conscience is deemed by Gadamer to be the most important development that has occurred in the last centuries of Western history. As he writes in the introduction to *Truth and Method*:

So folgeschwer und bis auf den Grund gehend die Umformungen des abendländischen philosophischen Denkens auch gewesen sind, die mit der Latinisierung der griechischen Begriffe und der Einförmung der lateinischen Begriffssprache in die neueren Sprachen vor sich gingen - die Entstehung des geschichtlichen Bewusstseins in den letzten Jahrhunderten bedeutet ein Einschnitt von noch tieferer Art.²⁸⁸

The historical conscience is formed first of all with the appearance of the historical school in Germany. The works of Droysen and Ranke are representative in this regard. But the historical conscience does not get fully developed until the emergence of Dilthey.

²⁸⁸ Gadamer, H.-G., *op.cit.*, XXX/XXXI.

Dilthey sought to ground the problem of historicity by providing it with an epistemological foundation. In this way he criticized the project of the historical school.

As Dilthey wrote:

Anstatt in die erkenntnistheoretischen Voraussetzungen der historischen Schule und die des Idealismus von Kant bis Hegel zurückzugehen und so die Unvereinbarkeit dieser Voraussetzungen zu erkennen, haben sie diese Standpunkte unkritisch verbunden.²⁸⁹

Dilthey's analyses rest on a concept of life understood as inner expression. Life is conceptualized as a unity that exteriorizes itself according to Dilthey. This formulation is very close to that of Hegel, as Gadamer notes.

In order to continue the comparison between Gadamer's and Nietzsche's theses concerning history, it is useful to look at how Gadamer understands the contributions of Ranke and Droysen to the understanding of history. The problem of the historical conscience must remain our guiding thread when trying to establish a basis of comparison between Nietzsche and Gadamer. Gadamer notes Ranke's admiration for "constants", but he comments that Ranke did not possess an accurate understanding of the historical conscience. In accordance with his famous claim that there is more *Sein* than *Bewusstsein* in the *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*, Gadamer puts more emphasis on the historical process than on the awareness that we as finite consciousnesses can develop of it. In this sense he writes:

Dass die Weltgeschichte in kontinuierlicher Entwicklung diese abendländische Kulturwelt heraufgeführt hat, ist abermals keine bloße Erfahrungstatsache, die das historische Bewusstsein feststellt, sondern eine Bedingung des historischen Bewusstseins selber...²⁹⁰

The meaning of history or the possibility of the question of this meaning is raised

²⁸⁹ Dilthey, W., *Gesammelte Schriften VII*, 281, quoted by Gadamer on p.223 of the German edition of *Truth and Method*, 3 erweiterte Auflage, Tübingen, Mohr, 1972.

by the constance and the continuity of the evolution of the historical world process and not by an experience that is undergone by the historical conscience. Gadamer's thesis is strong insofar as he affirms a unity of history of the world: "Insofern ist es nicht beliebig, dass die Einheit der Weltgeschichte auf der Einheit der abendländischen Kulturwelt beruht, zu der die abendländische Wissenschaft im ganzen und die Geschichte als Wissenschaft im besonderen gehören."²⁹¹ We thus see that a unity of the history of the world is envisaged by Gadamer and that this unity rests on the fact that Western science and history as science can be deemed to be part of the unity of the Western cultural world.

For Nietzsche history is not conceived as science, rather Nietzsche argues with such an understanding of history as science. In the *Second Untimely Meditation*, history is conceived in relation to art and as edification i.e., as the right kind of education that can lead to the formation of men of action (Polybius). History is conceived by Nietzsche esthetically in the early writings as a consoling power. An understanding of history is developed organically by absorbing the many historical documents. History and the understanding of history are conceived on the model of a *Kunstlehre*. An artistic tact and not a rigorous method is what allows one to move through and understand the multifaceted aspects of history.

Gianni Vattimo makes an interesting point with respect to Nietzsche's relation to historicism in his 1974 book of essays *Il soggetto et la maschera*.²⁹² His comments are useful, since he approaches Nietzsche from a "linguistic-hermeneutic" perspective, precisely in the footsteps of Gadamer. Vattimo argues that there is a dialectical-

²⁹⁰ Gadamer, H.-G., *op.cit.*, p.212.

²⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p.213.

²⁹² Vattimo, G., *Il soggetto e la maschera, Nietzsche e il problema della liberazione*, pp.78-79, Milano, Bompiani, 1974. This thesis permeates all of *Il soggetto e la maschera*, but the essay *Metafisica e smascheramento* in *Il soggetto e la maschera*, pp.71-93, is particularly relevant for this theme.

phenomenological (in Hegel's sense) moment to Nietzsche's philosophy. For Vattimo, these dialectical-phenomenological elements are only fully overcome in Nietzsche's mature work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Vattimo sees a parallelism between the developments of Nietzsche and Hegel regarding their understanding of the history of the West.

In relation to this Western history, in the *Second Untimely Meditation*, Nietzsche defines culture as "the stylistic unity of the artistic expressions of a people". This unity alluded to by Nietzsche is present throughout the *Second Untimely Meditation*. Nietzsche identifies the dichotomy between substance and form, between inner and outer as the problem that affects modern culture. One needs to distinguish Nietzsche's classicism from that of Hegel's as it is most clearly expressed in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. Hegel still operates with the balance between form and content, Being and appearance that is characteristic of ancient Greek culture. In Nietzsche, there is a tragic rupture between Being and appearance, between form and substance. In the early writings, and this includes the *Second Untimely Meditation*, Nietzsche still experiences the loss of balance between form and substance as a tragic rupture and a problem.

Historicism can be understood as the effacement of a present culture in the face of the past cultures that constitute its history. In this sense, the *Second Untimely Meditation* has a historicist moment. The monumental aspect of history described by Nietzsche presents the danger of leading to an overvaluation of the past with respect to the present. There are also Hegelian-dialectical accents to the *Second Untimely Meditation* with its insistence on a German *spiritual* unity. Nietzsche, although differing from Hegel, is also a classicist insofar as he takes antiquity and more precisely the tragic age preceding Attic classicism as a model that can educate and criticize the present.

Nietzsche is influenced by Schopenhauer in his rejection of Hegel's thesis of the identity between Being and appearance. This dichotomy between Being and appearance pushes Nietzsche to reject classicism and the idea of antiquity as a model. For Hegel, antiquity is classical insofar as it consists in a perfect coincidence between inner and outer, essence and manifestation, thing in itself and phenomenon. For Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, the classical consists in the powerlessness to achieve the balance, unity and identity between inner and outer, essence and manifestation. As Gianni Vattimo has pointed out, classicism is not simply rejected by Nietzsche when he comes into contact with Schopenhauer, it is reinterpreted as "a specific form of mask". Thus, antiquity still functions as a model in Nietzsche, albeit as a model characterized by rupture and imbalance.

A question that needs to be answered is whether Nietzsche and Gadamer function with the same concept of historicism. For Gadamer, historicism consists in the fact that we believe we can fully abstract from our present epoch and transpose ourselves into a past epoch (by "co-geniality" as in Schleiermacher's understanding of hermeneutics). As Gadamer puts it:

Das war vielmehr die naive Voraussetzung des Historismus, dass man sich in den Geist der Zeit versetzen, dass man in deren Begriffen und Vorstellungen denken solle und nicht in seinen eigenen und auf diese Weise zur historischen Objektivität vordringen könne.²⁹³

For Nietzsche, the problem with the study of history is that it methodologically attempts to conceive history as science. In fact, Gadamer is right when he claims that Nietzsche is not so much opposed to the consciousness of history as he is to conceiving history purely as objective science. It is when history is conceived as objective science that it becomes detrimental to action and to life.

In order to compare Nietzsche and Gadamer's concepts of history, we have to elucidate Nietzsche's concept of history as it is developed and evolves throughout the Nietzschean *corpus*. Nietzsche's concept of history is differentiated across his *oeuvre*. This has been correctly pointed out by Gianni Vattimo.²⁹⁴ In the early period of the *Second Untimely Meditation* and of *Human, All-too-Human*, history is still conceived along phenomenologico-dialectical lines (in Hegel's usage of the term). In the *Second Untimely Meditation*, the emphasis on the need for a unity between form and substance, between inner and outer is still reminiscent of the Hegelian synthesis.

In the later writings, history is conceived genealogically and as decadence or nihilism. Heidegger has attempted to show that nihilism conceived historically is the inverse of the Hegelian movement of actualization of freedom in history. Ultimately this Heideggerian move must be seen as untenable and as a purely strategic technique that attempts to step beyond the philosophical projects of both these thinkers. But let us return to Nietzsche's concept of history. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, a genealogical concept of history is developed by Nietzsche by referring to the concepts of origin (*Ursprung*, *Herkunft* and *Entstehung*).²⁹⁵ History, conceived as genealogy, is essentially pluralistic. There is no grand narrative of history as in Hegel. Genealogical history undermines the possibility of a world-historic, universal History. According to the genealogical conception, there is no History, only histories. The unity that was bemoaned by Nietzsche in the *Second Untimely Meditation* is radically undermined by the genealogical conception of history.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Gadamer, H.-G., *op.cit.*, p.302.

²⁹⁴ Vattimo, *op.cit.* p.79.

²⁹⁵ See Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Translated from the French by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1977.

²⁹⁶ *HL*, 4, (*KSA* I, p.278).

Genealogical history functions by analyzing the hidden, protracted roots of a historical phenomenon. It seeks what lays dormant and what is covered over as the origin of the manifestation of the historical phenomenon. A historical phenomenon is explained in the German historical school as being the function of a unity and continuity of the Western world that manifests itself in history. For genealogical thought the origin of a historical phenomenon is neither manifest nor unitary. A genealogical account of history consists in a genetic account of an event that always seeks a plural and pluri-shaped origin.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche conceptualized history as the struggle between the slave and the master moralities. This can be seen as a covert polemic with Hegel for whom the master-slave dialectic constitutes a fundamental figure in the architectonic of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. For Hegel, it is ultimately the slave that wins the struggle for recognition because by laboring and staying in touch with the earth, he becomes more *natural* than the master. For Nietzsche, the master is more active, as opposed to the slave who is deemed to be reactive. Nietzsche and Hegel both agree that the history of the West must be understood in terms of the struggle between the master and the slave figures and moralities. But their visions of this history are fundamentally at odds. The struggle between the master and the slave moralities can be re-translated, for Nietzsche at least, and in the *Genealogy*, as the struggle between Rome (master) and Judea (slave). For Nietzsche, the relationship between the master and slave moralities does determine the history of the West fundamentally²⁹⁷, but this determination is not conceptualized through a dialectic of recognition. The master does not need the recognition of the slave, he does not desire the desire of the slave in order to be

²⁹⁷ This is implicit in Nietzsche's theses about the master and slave moralities that are developed in the first essay of *On a Genealogy of Morals*.

essentially that which he is: active. Rather the being-active of the master is not defined in terms of a consciousness that opposes him and against which this master must risk his own life. The master is free and active because he does not possess the moral conscience of the slave that determines the slave's essential reactivity.

I will now turn to an examination of Gadamer's concept of history in order to be able to establish a comparison with Nietzsche's concept of history. Gadamer conceives of history as a fusion of horizons; the concept of horizon that had already had a certain valence in the works of Nietzsche and Husserl. The horizon is what surrounds us and beyond which we cannot see. It is in virtue of being surrounded by a horizon that we are historical and perceiving beings. Gadamer recognizes his debt towards Husserl and Nietzsche when it comes to the concept of horizon.²⁹⁸

The relation to Nietzsche is more implicit than the one that links Gadamer to Husserl. Thus Gadamer will write:

Es ist keine richtige Beschreibung des historischen Bewusstseins, wenn man mit Nietzsche von den vielen wechselnden Horizonten spricht, in die es sich zu versetzen lehrt. Wer derart von sich selber wegsieht, hat gerade keinen historischen Horizont, und Nietzsches Aufweis des Nachteils der Historie für das Leben trifft in Wahrheit nicht das historische Bewusstsein als solches, sondern, die Selbstentfremdung, die ihm widerfährt, wenn es die Methodik der modernen historischen Wissenschaft für sein eigentliches Wesen hält.²⁹⁹

In the *Problem of the Historical Conscience*, Gadamer defines the historical conscience in this way: "Nous comprenons par conscience historique le privilège de l'homme moderne d'avoir pleinement conscience de l'historicité de tout présent et de la relativité de toutes les opinions."³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 307.

²⁹⁹ *Idem*, p. 310.

³⁰⁰ Gadamer, H.-G., *Le problème de la conscience historique. Les problèmes épistémologiques des sciences humaines*, Publications Universitaires de Louvain, Louvain, 1963, p.8.

There is thus a decisive tension between Nietzsche's vision and Gadamer's.

Nietzsche writes:

Je stärkere Wurzeln die innerste Natur eines Menschen hat, um so mehr wird er auch von der Vergangenheit sich aneignen oder anzwängen; und dächte man sich die mächtigste und ungeheureste Natur, so wäre sie daran zu erkennen, dass es für sie gar keine Grenze der historischen Sinnes geben würde, an der er überwuchernd und schädlich zu wirken vermöchte; alles Vergangene, eigenes und fremdestes, würde sie an sich heran, in sich hineinziehen und gleichsam zu Blut umschaffen. Das was eine solche Natur nicht bezwingt, weiss sie zu vergessen; es ist nicht mehr da, der Horizont ist geschlossen,... Und dies ist ein allgemeines Gesetz: jedes Lebendige kann nur innerhalb eines Horizontes gesund, stark und fruchtbar werden; ist es unermöglich einen Horizont um sich zu ziehen und zu selbstisch wiederum, innerhalb eines fremden den eigenen Blick einzuschliessen, so siecht es matt oder überhastig zu zeitigen Untergänge dahin.”³⁰¹

The tension between Gadamer's vision and that of Nietzsche lies in the fact that for Gadamer, *contra* Nietzsche, the fact that the lines of horizon move and displace themselves is something positive. Furthermore, for Gadamer, the horizon that surrounds us and cannot be fully closed, as is the case sometimes for Nietzsche, but must always retain a certain mobility and porosity. Thus Gadamer holds that the possibility of a completely closed horizon is an abstraction of the historical conscience.

There are traces of a dialectic in Gadamer's concept of history. This dialectic is subtle and it can be argued that, for Gadamer, history is conceived not so much dialectically as dialogically. The horizons that constitute our human historicity are in constant movement and, in fact, Gadamer claims that we are carried by a single, unique historical horizon. Thus, ultimately for Gadamer there is something like an ontological unity and continuity of history. This affirmation must be moderated of course. There is a tension between the second and third parts of *Truth and Method*. The second part of

Truth and Method places a lot more emphasis on the determination of human consciousness by history. We are, in virtue of being human and alive, inescapably determined by our historical nature. There is a unity of history that is affirmed by Gadamer in the elaboration of his concept of history of efficiency (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). But this unity of history is also dialectical and dialogical. There is a unique, unitary horizon that dialectically determines our historical being. However this unique horizon is made up of a plurality of horizons that can “speak” to each other across the flow of time and history. The historical horizons are co-extensively linguistic horizons. The historical horizons self-mediate and sublimate each other and this occurs dialectically. But, as has been pointed out, the dialectic is for Gadamer, primordially dialogue. Through his notion of dialogue, Gadamer introduces a flexibility in his concept of history that prevents it from being simply reduced to the views of Hegel or of the German historical school. With respect to Nietzsche, however, Gadamer’s concept of history lacks the genetic and genealogical aspect. There is still a sense in Gadamer that there is one History that deploys itself through a unitary horizon that reveals itself to humanity. This notion is thoroughly given up in Nietzsche.

As alluded to above, there is no History for Nietzsche but there are histories. For Gadamer, there is still something like a *telos* of history as the horizons sublimate and imbricate themselves into a unique horizon that essentially reveals itself to humanity. This is the case even though there is a dialogue between the horizons and between the interpreter and the tradition. History still possesses its *telos* in the understanding in Gadamer and in the elevation of a truth claim. By comparison for Nietzsche, history has to be operationalized and made useful for life. History for Nietzsche is radically plural, genealogical and genetical and this differentiates him importantly from Gadamer.

³⁰¹ KSA I, p.251.

The problem of the closure and openness of horizons must be related to the Gadamerian notion of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness “replaces itself” (sich versetzt) in the past historical horizons, but this (re)placement is at the same time an elevation to the universal that overcomes the particularity of the historical conscience at the same time as it overcomes the particularity of the sublated horizon. This reading of the fusion of horizons goes in the direction of a possible liquidation of historicism rather than its accomplishment in the Gadamerian hermeneutic, and is not without controversy. Of course, Gadamer’s position with respect to the historical consciousness is essentially ambiguous. On the one hand, he believes that this consciousness represents a recent and radical development of Western history. Elsewhere, Gadamer asks himself if the historical consciousness is not a utopic ideal that contradicts itself.³⁰²

³⁰² *Idem*, p. 235.

Conclusion

We have argued in this section that Nietzsche's elimination of teleology from within Becoming and this entails that he also eliminates purpose from within history. Nietzsche provides a genealogical and genetical account of history. He pluralizes the essentialized concept of history that is present in Hegel (and this essentialized concept of history is the one that Gadamer still uses). The elimination of a rational *telos* from history can be understood in terms of Nietzsche's naturalism and pragmatism. The *Second Untimely Meditation* is still operating to a certain extent with a historicist concept of history with its great emphasis on a historical consciousness. It is only with *Zarathustra* and the *Genealogy of Morals* and that Nietzsche evolves beyond historicism. The conscience of history is re-worked in the *Genealogy* as the tension between slave and master moralities. Through this move, Nietzsche goes beyond Hegel's mere integration of the master-slave dialectic into the movement of consciousness and self-consciousness. By re-conceptualizing the relationship between slave and master moralities in terms of the concepts of reactive (slave) and active (master), Nietzsche advances beyond the merely dialectical conception of history that Hegel possesses. This is the case because for Hegel history embodies a purposive, unitary *telos* whereas as I am arguing throughout this thesis, Nietzsche eliminates teleology from within Becoming (and thus from history).

3.4 Nietzsche, Epistemology and Becoming

Nietzsche eliminates teleology from Becoming and this is due in part to his “naturalism”. The concept of rational and natural teleology which was still prevalent in Hegel’s logical Idealism, came under severe criticism with the appearance of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. The idea of a purpose in nature, of a divine Providence and design came under fire with the proposal of the hypothesis of natural selection. It is not clear however that by eliminating ultimate purpose from nature, Nietzsche has clearly understood Aristotle’s doctrine of Becoming, which is at once physical and metaphysical. To remove teleology from nature is one thing but to remove it from Becoming is another. Becoming is a central concept in Nietzsche and in modern philosophy in general since it mediates between History and nature. In Aristotle, Becoming explains how an entity called substance can suffer the existence of different attributes at different times. But for us moderns, Becoming also has a historical component. This is the case in Hegel where Becoming is understood rationally as the self-development and self-actualization of the Idea in History. For Nietzsche it is this type of discourse about History that treats it as an over-arching principle and teleological process that has become impossible to preserve. Teleology is removed by Nietzsche from within nature and from within History, from an epistemological and a metaphysical point of view.

In the elimination of teleology from within Becoming, what has to be distinguished is the existence of an objective teleology and a subjective teleology. It might be the case that Nietzsche reduces the objective teleology to a subjective teleology through his concept of will to power. On this reading, the “objective” teleology would be a mere side-effect of will to power. But there might remain a subjective teleology that

cannot be fully dispensed with, even in the face of the “factuality” of will to power. The question that needs to be answered is what this subjective teleology might be.

The influence of naturalism on Nietzsche can scarcely be minimized. His epistemology is naturalistic through and through. I will show this by examining some of the posthumous fragments that had been grouped under the title the *Will to Power as Knowledge (Wille zur Macht als Erkenntnis)*. An important fragment is the following:

Der Intellekt kann sich nicht selbst kritisieren, eben weil er nicht zu vergleichen ist mit andersgearteten Intellekten und weil sein Vermögen zu erkennen erst Angesichts der “wahren Wirklichkeit” zu Tage treten würde d.h. weil, um den Intellekt zu kritisieren, wir ein höheres Wesen mit “absoluter Erkenntnis” sein müssten. Dies setzt schon voraus, dass es, abseits von allen perspektivischen Arten der Betrachtung und sinnlich-geistiger Aneignung, etwas gäbe, ein “An-sich”-Aber die psychologische ableitung des Glaubens an Dinge verbietet uns von “Dingen an sich” zu reden.³⁰³

This idea of the intellect as an instrument that supposes erroneously that it could criticize itself is an obvious reference to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which Kant claimed that reason could, by restricting its scope, criticize itself and establish itself on a sound and coherent footing. This idea of knowledge as instrument is repeated by Hegel in the Introduction to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* when he claims that the absolute is like a bird that could be captured by the instrument represented by knowledge. But Hegel refuses to follow Kant’s way of putting the problem from an epistemological perspective and he is followed in this by Nietzsche.³⁰⁴

However, Nietzsche takes a different tack than Hegel as the following citation shows:

Dass zwischen Subjekt und Objekt eine Art adäquater Relation stattfindet; dass das Objekt etwas ist, das von Innen gesehen

³⁰³ *KSA* 12, 5 [11].

³⁰⁴ See Habermas, J., *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 12, Nietzsche’s Reduktion der menschlichen Interesse.

Subjekt wäre, ist eine gutmüthige Erfindung, die, wie ich denke, ihre Zeit gehabt hat. Das Maass dessen, was uns überhaupt bewusst [wird], ist ja ganz und gar abhängig von grober Nützlichkeit des Bewusstwerdens: wie erlaubte uns diese Winkelperspektive des Bewusstseins irgendwie über "Subjekt" und "Objekt" Aussagen, mit denen die Realität berührt würde!"³⁰⁵

Here, Nietzsche refers to the analysis in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which consciousness of the object becomes self-consciousness through a movement of interiorization and reflexion. Hegel's brilliant analysis is relativized by Nietzsche through the problematization of the concepts of "consciousness" and "becoming-conscious". Both the subject and the object, both consciousness and self-consciousness are epi-phenomenal for Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, we do not have privileged access to our inner sense. The inner sense is just as problematical for Nietzsche as the outer sense. Thus, Nietzsche eliminates from within post-Hegelian epistemology what remains of Cartesian certainty. For Nietzsche, we cannot have certainty about our inner sense since the last *factum* that can be reached is will to power. We ourselves are will to power and so is all reality that surrounds us. With respect to this discussion, Giorgio Colli has attracted attention to an important fragment in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*: "Exoterisch-esoterisch/1.-alles ist Wille gegen Willen 2 Es giebt gar keinen Willen/ 1 Causalismus 2 Es giebt nichts wie Ursache-Wirkung..."³⁰⁶

Nietzsche also mentions this distinction of an exoteric meaning and an esoteric meaning in his published writings.³⁰⁷ How should we understand this relationship between esoteric and exoteric teachings in Nietzsche's thought? The exoteric is generally understood as a public teaching directed outwards, towards everyone. The esoteric, on the

³⁰⁵ KSA 13, 11 [120].

³⁰⁶ KSA 12, 1 [9].

³⁰⁷ See Nietzsche, F., *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 30, Translated by R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, London, 1973.

other hand is understood as a secret teaching that destined to the few, to a secret elite that can fully comprehend the teaching. While Nietzsche himself alludes to this distinction in his thought, I believe that it is ultimately not so fruitful to distinguish between a public teaching and a private, secret teaching in Nietzsche's thought. I believe this to be the case because, even though Nietzsche might have thought that he was operating in this way, by attracting the masses to his teaching through the exoteric and teaching the elites something altogether different through the esoteric, this self-interpretation of Nietzsche's does not stand to scrutiny. Philosophy distinguishes itself from mysticism by positing itself as a public and scientific endeavor. If we are to read Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher we must abandon the conception of a "secret" teaching.³⁰⁸

All of the Nietzschean *corpus* is open to scientific scrutiny and this can only mean that the distinction between the esoteric and exoteric teaching must vanish. This might not resolve all the problems we are faced with when trying to understand what Nietzsche tries to articulate with respect to the will. What can it mean that the will does not exist and that at the same time all is will against will? Perhaps what is simply meant by Nietzsche here is that we cannot regress onto Schopenhauerism and Romanticism. However, why explain this through the ultimately mysterious difference between exoteric teachings and esoteric teachings? Isn't that distinction political whereas Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer and Romanticism are more aesthetical in nature?

Ultimately we might not be able to resolve these questions. Nietzsche's thought is one that functions by the positing of contradictions and by progressing through contradictions as has correctly been identified by Müller-Lauter. We cannot explain the contradictions away because Nietzsche's thought struggles at the limits of coherence. It

³⁰⁸ The scholar who is credited with re-activating the exoteric-esoteric reading is Leo Strauss in his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, albeit for reasons different from intellectual hubris as such.

expresses itself in contradictions, and creates tensions through these contradictions but it reproduces through these tensions the contradictory nature of existence. How does death come from life and life from death? These are questions whose answers involve us in contradictions and perhaps the only way of explaining the contradictions in Nietzsche's thought is by changing the subject and claiming that existence itself is contradictory and a thought that is rooted in existence must of necessity contradict itself.

A consequence of Nietzsche's radical pragmatico-naturalistic epistemology can be glossed from the following quote: "Es gibt weder 'Geist', noch Vernunft, noch Denken, noch Seele, noch Wille, noch Wahrheit: alles Fiktionen die unbrauchbar sind."³⁰⁹ This can be taken as a purely pragmatic assertion on Nietzsche's side if we agree that the preceding concepts "'spirit', reason, thinking, consciousness, soul, will, truth" are not experimentally "discoverable" in the world. Another quote that is directly related to naturalism is the following. "Anders: das Mass des Erkennenwollens hängt ab von des Mass des Wachsens des Willens zur Macht der Art: eine Art ergreift so viel Realität, um über sie Herr zu werden, um sie in Dienst zu nehmen"³¹⁰ This quote shows something that I argue for later in this section: that the metaphysical elements of Nietzsche's thought are intertwined with the epistemological threads of his thought. The desire for knowledge is tied to the growth of will to power. But as Heidegger has successfully showed, Nietzsche constructs a metaphysics of will to power. An important question is how this metaphysics of will to power coheres with the naturalistic epistemological explanations that also make use of the concept of will to power and of Becoming.

³⁰⁹ KSA 13, 14 [122].

³¹⁰ KSA 13, 14 [122].

I will now examine how Heidegger interpreted certain aspects of Nietzsche's epistemology with respect to Descartes' epistemology. This makes sense because it brings to light the naturalistic and pragmatic elements in Nietzsche's epistemology. Heidegger claims that Nietzsche misunderstood Descartes' position and that his understanding of truth and subjectivity is still very much indebted to Descartes. The nature of what Nietzsche describes as will to power is somehow still related to Descartes' positioning of the locus of knowledge within the subject. Heidegger takes particular offense at Nietzsche's claim that when individuals engage in logic or speculative philosophy, the concept of substance that is used is derived from the subject-concept and not the other way around. "Der *Substanzbegriff* eine Folge des *Subjektbegriffs*: nicht umgekehrt!"³¹¹

Historically, the subject has been developed from the Aristotelian concept of substance, through a scholastic-Cartesian development. But Nietzsche is articulating something about logic, grammar and psychology when he is making substance originate in the concept of the subject.³¹² Heidegger argues that Nietzsche's notion of perspectival truth only apparently overcomes the traditional notion of truth as adequation-representation. Heidegger's argument is rather obscure at this point. He claims that since Nietzsche believes that truth is a necessary error: "Wahrheit ist die Art von Irrthum, ohne welche eine bestimmte Art von lebendigen Wesen nicht leben könnte. Der Werth für das Leben entscheidet zuletzt."³¹³ and since truth is the foundation of logic, then logic should stem from a will to truth. But because Heidegger finds a quote in which Nietzsche claims precisely the opposite ("[...] die Logik stammt nicht aus dem Willen zur Wahrheit"³¹⁴, he

³¹¹ KSA 12, 10 [19].

³¹² See Haar, M., *La maladie native du langage* in *Nietzsche et la métaphysique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1993.

³¹³ KSA 11, 34 [253].

³¹⁴ KSA 11, 40 [13].

believes that he is entitled to claim that Nietzsche's concept of truth as vital error and illusion is based on the traditional concept of truth as adequation of knowledge with things and reality. Heidegger gives a pithy summary of his understanding of Nietzsche's position: "Wenn Nietzsche sagt: der Begriff des "Ich" und damit des "Subjekts" ist eine Erfindung der "Logik", dann müsste er die Subjektivität als "Illusion" zurückweisen, wenigstens dort, wo sie als Grundwirklichkeit der Metaphysik in Anspruch genommen wird."³¹⁵

It must be understood that Heidegger reads Nietzsche as a hyper-Cartesian. He believes that will to power is the culmination of the metaphysics of subjectivity that eternally wills its own will. Although this reading is compelling, it sounds at least counter-intuitive when we think that Nietzsche was very suspicious of subjectivity and consciousness.

But let us return back to our main thesis which is constituted by the claim that Nietzsche eliminates teleology from within Becoming. One hypothesis that I am working with is the following: Nietzsche eliminates teleology from his metaphysical account since he believes the *telos* to be linked to optimism and to a rationality that has been rendered problematic in the wake of Darwin's account of natural history. But Nietzsche was not a straight-out Darwinist despite the deep influence of Darwinism on his thought. It is clear that for Nietzsche the intellect is an "instrument" and an "organ" for knowledge. And it is also clear that such an instrument satisfies pragmatic and natural needs. If the pragmatic and natural needs that determine us, our society and natural environment, were different, then so would our organs for knowledge be, according to Nietzsche and our knowledge would ultimately be different as well. As Nietzsche puts it:

³¹⁵ Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche II*, S.186.

Die Art zu kennen und zu erkennen ist selber schon unter den Existenz-Bedingungen: dabei ist der Schluss, dass es keine anderen Intellekt-Arten geben koennte (für uns selber) als die, welche uns erhält, eine Übereilung: diese thatsächliche Existenz-Bedingung ist vielleicht *zufällig* und vielleicht keineswegs nothwendig.³¹⁶

Nietzsche shows that the intellect *qua* will to power must also and predominantly work towards the enhancement of a form of life and not only to its preservation as Darwin might claim. By seeing this notion of enhancement as the dominant characteristic of all forms of life, Nietzsche radically parts ways with Darwin's naturalism. This is the first moment of disagreement of Nietzsche with Darwin: enhancement is the fundamental feature of life and not preservation.

But Nietzsche also disagrees more fundamentally with Darwin when it comes to the process of natural selection. This is the case because for Nietzsche, contra Darwin, it is the weak who win the struggle for existence against the strong. This is true because the strong are solitary and isolate themselves, whereas the weak unite together and manage to destroy the strong. This can be glossed from the following quote from *Twilight of the Idols* in section 14 of Skirmishes of an Untimely Man, "Anti-Darwin":

Gezetzt aber, es giebt diesen Kampf-und in der That, er kommt vor-, so läuft er leider umgekehrt aus als die Schule Darwin's wünscht, als man vielleicht mit ihr wünschen dürfte: nämlich zu ungunsten der Starken, der Bevorrechtigten, der glücklichen Ausnahmen [...] Die Gattungen wachsen nicht in der Vollkommenheit: die Schwachen werden immer über die Starken Herr - das macht, sie sind die grosse Zahl, sie sind auch klüger [...]

The tendency of the weak to congregate and of the strong to separate or isolate themselves from the masses is further explored by Nietzsche in the following paragraph of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he notes that:

Denn man übersehe die nicht: die Starken streben ebenso naturnothwendig *auseinander*, als die Schwachen zu einander;

³¹⁶ KSA II, 26 [127].

wenn erstere sich verbinden, so geschieht es nur in der Aussicht auf eine aggressive Gesamt-Aktion und Gesamt-Befriedigung ihres Willens zur Macht, mit vielem Widerstande des Einzel-Gewissens; letztere dagegen ordnen sich zusammen, mit Lust gerade an dieser Zusammenordnung, -ihr Instinkt ist dabei ebenso befriedigt, wie der Instinkt der geborenen "Herren" (das heisst der solitären Raubthier-Species Mensch) im Grunde durch Organisation gereizt und unberuhigt wird.³¹⁷

Thus, although influenced by Darwin in the conception of his epistemology with the talk of the connection between the "organs of knowledge" and our perception, Nietzsche rejects Darwinism's central tenet of natural selection, or rather he inverts it by claiming that there is a struggle for existence but that it is, for the most part, won by the weak and not the strong. The problem of truth is connected for Nietzsche to the concept of values. Nietzsche "discovers" that the relation between the true and apparent worlds must be related back to problems of value:

die *Werthschätzung* "ich glaube, dass das und das so ist" als Wesen der "Wahrheit" in den *Werthschätzungen* drücken sich Erhaltungs- und Wachstums-Bedingungen aus alle unsere Erkenntnisorgane und -Sinne sind nur entwickelt in Hinsicht auf Erhaltungs und Wachstums-Bedingungen das Vertrauen zur Vernunft und ihren Kategorien, zur Dialektik, also die Werthschätzung der Logik beweist nur die durch Erfahrung bewiesene Nützlichkeit derselben für das Leben [...] Also dass etwas für wahr gehalten werden muss, ist nothwendig; nicht dass etwas wahr ist. "*die wahre und die scheinbare Welt*" – dieser Gegensatz wird von mir zurückgeführt auf Werthverhältnisse. Wir haben unsere Erhaltungs-Bedingungen projicirt als Prädikate des Seins überhaupt, dass wir in unserem Glauben stabil sein müssen um zu gedeihen, daraus haben wir gemacht, dass die "wahre" Welt keine wandelbare und werdende, sondern eine *seiende* ist.³¹⁸

The previous citation is important because it establishes the connection I noted earlier, between Nietzsche's epistemology and his metaphysics. Value is both a moral and a metaphysical concept. But by relating the concept of truth (the *dass das und das so ist* and the *etwas für wahr halten*) to conditions of preservation and growth (*Erhaltungs und*

³¹⁷ GM, *Dritte Abhandlung*, 18, (KSA 4, 384).

Wachstums-Bedingungen), Nietzsche in fact both *moralizes* and *ontologizes* epistemology.

In fact, it has been my argument that we cannot successfully disconnect Nietzsche's epistemology from his metaphysics. As has been correctly identified by Heidegger, there are significant metaphysical elements in Nietzsche's thought.³¹⁹ These metaphysical elements stand side by side with a powerful critique of metaphysics. This is what makes Nietzsche's thought so difficult to seize. The skeptical elements in Nietzsche's thought stem from his original naturalistic epistemology, but they are intertwined with the "positive" metaphysical elements. These positive elements are the teachings of the will to power, eternal recurrence, *Übermensch* and nihilism

We can say that for Nietzsche, Becoming radically conditions knowledge. This is the case because Becoming lacks a point of anchorage, a point of stability from within which to establish a stable theory of knowledge. This is where the previous quote becomes interesting. It connects the talk of organs of knowledge with the distinction between the real and apparent worlds. Thus it makes the connection between Nietzsche's epistemology, his theory of truth, and the real and apparent worlds which constitute Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. Furthermore, the quote connects Nietzsche's theory of values to the epistemology and the metaphysics. In fact, for Nietzsche metaphysics is understood as a series of value relations. But the logic and epistemology that are alluded to by Nietzsche are reconstructed from a naturalistic point of view. In the following quote Nietzsche re-emphasizes that the categories of reason are conditions of life. Thus, here again, Nietzsche wants to redirect, knowledge and epistemology to a vitalistic,

³¹⁸ KSA 12, 9 [38].

³¹⁹ This is a well-known fact. The most obvious reference to it is the fact that Heidegger claims in *Nietzsche I* (p.362, this is the title of a section) that Nietzsche has a fundamental metaphysical position (*metaphysische Grundstellung*).

naturalistic consideration that reminds us of Darwin. Reason is considered to be a mere idiosyncrasy of a species of animal. That is, we only have reason as a feature of our species. If we had been a different kind of species we could have existed devoid of reason or we could have existed furnished with a different kind of reason. This is Nietzsche's relativization of epistemology and of knowledge in terms of naturalistic categories:

Die Kategorien [der Vernunft, P.C.] sind "Wahrheiten" nur in dem Sinne, als sie lebenbedingend für uns sind: wie der Euklidische Raum eine solche bedingte "Wahrheit" ist. (An sich geredet, da Niemand die Nothwendigkeit, dass es gerade Menschen giebt, aufrecht erhalten wird, ist die Vernunft, so wie der Euklidische Raum eine bloße Idiosynkrasie bestimmter Thierarten und eine neben viele anderen...)³²⁰

The preceding citation is interesting. It is important because like this one it makes the connection between the principles of logic (the law of contradiction) and the dichotomy that is so central to Nietzsche's thought between the real and apparent worlds. If, as Nietzsche claims, the law of contradiction belongs to the apparent world and the apparent world disappears as well when the true world disappears, then, Nietzsche has successfully relativized the world of the "in itself" or of logic. Nietzsche's point is subtle, the world of Being and of logic possesses pre-suppositions. If the principle of non-contradiction is the ultimate principle of logic, Nietzsche proposes that one could step behind this ultimacy and consider what the actual pre-suppositions of this principle are. There are then only two possibilities. Either the principle possesses some pre-suppositions and then it is not absolutely necessary: opposite things *could* be posited of the same things at the same time. Or, the principle is really a *fundamentum* but then it conditions all the other logical principles that follow from it and in this sense acts like an imperative: opposite things *should* not be posited of the same things at the same time.

³²⁰ KSA 13, 14 [152].

But if the second consideration is the true one (and this is what is implied by Nietzsche following Aristotle), then we would have to admit that the world of Being and of logic is to a certain extent put together by us, constructed by us according to our practical needs:

Wenn, nach Aristoteles der Satz vom Widerspruch der Gewisseste aller Grundsätze ist, wenn er der letzte und unterste ist, auf den alle Beweisführung[en] zurückgehen, wenn in ihm das Princip aller anderen Axiome liegt: um so strenger sollte man erwägen, was er im Grunde schon an Behauptungen *voraussetzt*. Entweder wird mit ihm etwas in Betreff des Wirklichen, Seienden behauptet, wie als ob er dasselbe anderswoher bereits kannte: nämlich dass ihm entgegengesetzte Prädikate zugesprochen werden *können*. Oder der Satz will sagen: dass ihm entgegengesetzte Prädikate nicht zugesprochen werden *sollen*? ³²¹

Nietzsche's original epistemology is composed of an analysis that is both naturalistic and linguistic. The pragmatic elements of Nietzsche's analysis have been pointed out by Jürgen Habermas in *Erkenntnis und Interesse*. Ultimately Habermas concludes that Nietzsche's reduction of knowledge is not tantamount to a form of pragmatism even though it might share some of the features of pragmatism.

As I have claimed in Section 1.1, Nietzsche does not believe in the existence of identical objects in nature. It is only if we believe in the possibility of identity and identification that synthetic judgments are possible. But as pointed out in *KSA* 7, 19 [242], Nietzsche argues that at the heart of synthetic judgment lies metonymy or, as he puts it, a false identification (*falsche Gleichung*). From this, Nietzsche concludes that synthetic deductions (*Schlüsse*) are illogical (*Unlogisch*). The epistemology of the early *Nachlass* (1869-1874) is also connected to the notions of perception (*Empfindung*) and pleasure (*Lust*). Nietzsche does not yet possess the concept of force (*Kraft*) and power (*Macht*), however. In *KSA* 7, 19 [159], Nietzsche claims that the causal effect (*Stoß*: hit) of one atom upon another pre-supposes perception. Nietzsche struggles with the idea that

everything might have perception. But he believes that if everything has perception, then there is a mixture (*Durcheinander* which is the same word he uses to describe Anaxagorean mixture in *Philosophy in the Tragical Age of the Greeks*) of very small and very small perception-centers (*Empfindungscentren*). Nietzsche then claims that perception-complexes (*Empfindungscomplexen*) are to be called will (*Wille*). What we are witnessing here is the genesis of the concept of will to power. The *Empfindungscentren* will become the *Kraftcentren* that make up the constellation of will and wills to power. Nietzsche seems to be influenced in these early epistemological reflexions by Empedocles' conception of love and hate as binding forces in nature. This is the case because Nietzsche claims that if "Lust Unlust Empfindung, Gedächtniss, Reflexbewegung" belonged to the essence of matter, then human knowledge would reach much deeper into the essence of things with respect to how "die erste Empfindung bringt bereits diese Kausalitätsempfindung hervor".

Nietzsche continues his linguistic analysis of knowledge by claiming that "Tropen sind's, nicht unbewusste Schlüsse, auf denen unsre Sinneswahrnehmungen beruhen."³²² Nietzsche's analysis of epistemology is at once linguistic, naturalistic and psychologistic (this last psychologistic feature has been well identified by Habermas in *Erkenntnis und Interesse*) and this too is what makes this analysis that constantly shifts between levels of discourse and conceptual domains so difficult to grasp. Nietzsche goes on to claim in *KSA* 7, 19 [228] that there is no knowledge without metaphor. According to him the error lies in the belief in a truth of sense impression (*Sinneseindrucks*).

Nietzsche asserts that a kind of stability could be achieved if we had a criterion (*Massstab*). But at the same time the worth (*Werthe*) of our knowledge depends on this

³²¹ *KSA* 12, 9 [97].

³²² *KSA* 7, 19 [215].

stability of the criterion. This citation is reminiscent of the passage in which Nietzsche claims that our faculty of knowledge is an object that needs to be criticized but that it needs to take the standards or the criteria (the *Massstab*) of the criticism from within itself and that hence it cannot effectively criticize itself. Here again, Nietzsche also claims that in order to determine the value of knowledge we must step beyond our faculty of knowledge in order to find a criterion that could validate this knowledge. This quote is thus consistent with Nietzsche's skepticism in the realm of epistemology.

Nietzsche's naturalism (and perhaps one could also call it a form of) utilitarianism is apparent insofar as he claims that the eternal natural laws can be summarized as to an attempt to grasp pleasure and flee from pain: This previous passage seems to confirm a certain naturalism on Nietzsche's side. He claims that "Die ganze Logik in der Natur löst sich dann auf in ein Lust und Unlustsystem." This can be understood in the utilitarian sense that we each seek to increase our pleasure and diminish our pain and this position would cohere with a form of naturalism at this early stage in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*.

The next passage is important because it shows the importance of the concept of metonymy in Nietzsche's early writings:

Alles Erklären und Erkennen ist eigentlich nur ein Rubrizieren. Nun mit kühnem Schwung: die Vielheit der Dinge wird unter einen Hut gebracht, wenn wir sie gleichsam als unzählige Handlungen einer Qualität betrachten z.B. als Handlungen des Wassers, wie bei Thales. Die Qualität „wässerig“, „feucht“. Die ganze Welt ist feucht, also ist Feuchtsein die ganze Welt. Metonymia! Ein falscher Schluß. Ein Prädikat ist verwechselt mit einer Summe von Prädikaten (Definition). Das logische Denken wenig geübt bei den Ioniern, entwickelt sich ganz langsam. Die falschen Schlüsse werden wir aber richtiger als Metonymien d.h. rhetorisch poetisch fassen. Alle rhetorischen Figuren (d.h. das Wesen der Sprache) sind logische Fehlschlüsse. Damit fängt die Vernunft an!³²³

³²³ KSA 7, 19 [215].

For Nietzsche the activity of rational explanation and recognition is assimilated to a rubrication. Starting from qualities such as watery, wet, philosophers (Nietzsche has Thales in mind) derive a substantive water or wetness. Nietzsche claims that this is metonymy and a false conclusion.³²⁴ The critique of truth as metaphor and as metonymy, and the related critique of metaphysical and logical identity have an important impact on Nietzsche's philosophy of Becoming. By criticizing identity, Nietzsche manages to deconstruct the difference between the real and apparent worlds and to remove teleology and permanence from within Becoming. The concept of identity that is radically criticized by Nietzsche is what allows permanence and teleology to be introduced within Becoming. By criticizing identity, Nietzsche already pre-figures the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics as permanent presence.

But let us get back to Nietzsche's citation. This citation is important because it contrasts logic with rhetoric. Rhetoric and logic developed around the same time in Greek civilization, but Nietzsche has an interesting conception of the contrast between rhetoric and logic since he claims that the rhetorical figure or what he calls the essence of language are logical fallacies. Nietzsche goes on to claim ironically that this is how reason begins, i.e. by distinguishing between rhetorical figures and logical fallacies. An alternative interpretation of the passage could be that reason begins by developing logical fallacies through the use of unconscious rhetorical and linguistic figures.

This passage is important because it explores and shows further Nietzsche's association between concepts and metaphors, and logic and figures of speech. There can be no knowledge without metaphor, according to Nietzsche at this early stage in the

³²⁴ A short reminder about metonymies might be in store here. A metonymy is the association of a linguistic term with with another in terms of contiguity and not through similarity as is the case with metaphor. For example if we say "Ottawa has issued a change on its foreign policy," we actually mean that the Canadian government or more specifically the cabinet that is situated in Ottawa has made a change in its foreign policy.

Nachlass. Furthermore, the concept kills the intuition (*Eindruck*) by capturing, limiting and *stabilizing* it. This quote is important because it continues the association and reduction of conceptual knowledge to knowledge through metaphors. This is also the position adopted by Nietzsche in the early and unpublished “*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*”. Thus knowledge cannot achieve truth and this is Nietzsche’s position at least in this early stage of his works.³²⁵

Nietzsche writes in the following passage that truth is a metaphor of which it has been forgotten that it is a metaphor. It is through repetitive and common usage of the same metaphor that we forget that it is a metaphor and hypostatize it into truth:

Unter „wahr“ wird zuerst nur verstanden das, was usuell die gewohnte Metapher ist also nur eine Illusion, die durch häufigen Gebrauch gewohnt worden ist und nicht mehr als Illusion empfunden wird: vergessene Metapher, d.h. eine Metapher, bei der vergessen ist, daß es eine ist.³²⁶

This quote continues the criticism of knowledge and truth in terms of the metaphor. This forgetfulness of metaphor qua metaphor and its confusion with truth is brought about by the fact that we use metaphors all the time in our ordinary commerce with each other and with our language. This ordinary usage of metaphors makes us forget that they are only metaphors and we believe, according to Nietzsche, that we have achieved something higher than metaphor and illusion, such as truth.

The following citation is reminiscent of my thesis in section 3.1. There, I claimed that Nietzsche did not believe in the existence of identical cases or types in nature.

Knowledge occurs through a deformation, that is, through an identification of non-identical cases. This passage goes well with all the passages that we have been examining

³²⁵ Some scholars such as Maudemarie Clark have argued that Nietzsche in his early phase rejects the possibility of truth at least in such texts as “*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*”. But later, and as part of his development, Nietzsche will accept according to Clark a non-metaphysical correspondence theory of truth. I have said more about this in the section 2.2 The Status of Nietzsche Scholarship where I deal more explicitly with Clark’s interpretation of Nietzsche.

in this context, which show that Nietzsche both estheticizes knowledge and naturalizes it to a certain extent in his early works.

Another important passage that is worth examining is the following:

Der Begriff entsteht aus einem Gleichsetzen des Nichtgleichen: d.h. durch die Täuschung, es gäbe ein Gleiches, durch die Voraussetzung von *Identitäten*: also durch falsche Anschauungen. Man sieht einen Menschen gehen: nennt es „gehen“. Jetzt einen Affen, Hund: sagt auch „gehen“.³²⁷

The last quote and the previous one are important, since Nietzsche again mentions that every knowledge is an identification of the non-identical, of what is similar. I have already mentioned this in section 1.1. Nietzsche does not believe in the existence of identical objects in nature. From this inexistence of identical objects, he develops a critique of Western logic and epistemology which, according to him, rests on the principle of identity and non-contradiction.

³²⁶ KSA 7, 19 [229].

Conclusion

We have seen in this section that Nietzsche's concepts of Becoming and of will to power allow us to claim that there is an intrinsic connection between Nietzsche's epistemology and his (anti-metaphysical) metaphysics. On the one hand, Nietzsche constructs a naturalistic and pragmatic epistemology and, on the other hand, with the concepts of Becoming and will to power he also construes a positive metaphysics. Nietzsche's epistemology is skeptical and it rejects certainty as the goal of knowledge. Nietzsche eliminates Cartesian certainty that was still a feature of Hegel's philosophy. At the same time, Nietzsche affirms that will to power is the last factum that can be reached. So will to power possesses a certain metaphysical positivity. But this contrasts with the fact that Nietzsche does not believe in the "real" existence of centers of force that exist temporarily and that are periodically replaced. Insofar as these centers of force act with respect to the principle of the enhancement of will to power, they must have a certain reality. But this reality is given only in the exteriorization of force which occurs dynamically. These centers of force lack a *telos*. The ultimate character of the world is thus chaos that is coordinated with a fugacious order.

Enhancement occurs, but one never reaches a point of stability. Change is permanent for Nietzsche and there is no point when the movement of enhancement of will to power and Becoming ever reaches permanence or stability. Thus we come back to our principal thesis, Nietzsche constructs a naturalistic and pragmatic epistemology but what allows him to do this is the elimination of teleology from within Becoming.

³²⁷ [Nietzsche's emphasis, P.C.], *KSA* 7, 23 [11].

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that Nietzsche's most important achievement was his attempt to free Becoming from teleology and thus from the taint of ontology. Through this move he manages at once to complete *and* to de-construct metaphysics as onto-theology. But this still leaves certain issues unresolved in his thought. Chief among them is the question of transcendence. If God is dead, then there is no more transcendence.

A few questions have guided my investigations surrounding the concept of Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy. I had wanted to know how the more skeptical and critical aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy could be integrated with the more metaphysical aspects that have been identified by some commentators such as Heidegger. What quickly became clear was that Nietzsche was not a thinker of the Being of beings but of Becoming. Nietzsche develops the equivalent of a metaphysics of Becoming. However, this metaphysics is one of a peculiar kind insofar as it lacks the consistent, non-contradictory, coherent and articulated aspect of a classic metaphysics. One might call Nietzsche's metaphysics a Romantic, ironic metaphysics in the sense of Schlegel and Novalis.

The concept of Becoming was traditionally analyzed by Aristotle in terms of potentiality (*dunamis*), actuality (*energeia*) and teleology (*entelecheia*). But, by claiming that actual substance is more fundamental than potential substance, Aristotle consolidates the privilege of the eternal, the permanent, the stable and the immutable within Western metaphysics. This privilege had already been partly conferred by Plato when he had conceived of the idea of the Good as Being. However, Aristotle re-inforces the Platonic onto-theological armature by introducing the notion of *entelecheia* into Becoming and showing still more clearly how the eternal (actual) and the perishable (potential) are

interconnected. Becoming is conceptualized in Aristotle as a movement from actuality to potentiality, but this occurs through the introduction of a purpose (*telos*) that links actuality to potentiality. *Entelecheia* is sometimes itself translated as actuality. In fact purpose or *entelecheia* is closer to actuality than to potentiality. This privilege of actuality and permanence is effectively criticized in Nietzsche's philosophy.

Nietzsche's contribution is to have purged Becoming of its ontological implications, and liberated metaphysics from the field of morality in which the metaphysical has always been grounded. By deconstructing Plato's link between the metaphysical object and the moral object, Nietzsche effects a historicization of morality and metaphysics. If the withdrawal from faith in morality is in fact a moral decision,³²⁸ it follows that his critique dissolves both the metaphysical and the moral. Nietzsche works this deconstruction of the two, detaching one from the other, in order to establish the priority of the moral over the metaphysical.

If Nietzsche was a great metaphysician in Heidegger's assessment, he was no less eminent as a dialectician. Heidegger identifies dialectical connections in Nietzsche's metaphysics (primarily between the will to power and eternal recurrence), but it is through the extraction of the Platonic dialectic of Being and Becoming and good and evil that Nietzsche effects this inversion of Platonism. Heidegger's claim that this inversion is accomplished solely through the affirmation that Becoming is nothing but an entrenchment in Platonism can be contested by the attribution of precedence to Becoming over Being.

Nietzsche "deconstructs" and destroys the distinction between Being and Becoming, as a careful reading of the *History of an Error* shows ("The true world -- we

³²⁸ Nietzsche, *Dawn*, Preface, Section 4. (KSA 3, 16).

have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one.*")

Heidegger has presented the most powerful, seductive and interesting reading of Nietzsche of the 20th century. But the question remains: can we progress with respect to this impressive interpretation? My claim is that we can. In fact, Heidegger has not done justice to Nietzsche's deep doctrine of Becoming. He has tried to fix, de-limit and permanentize (bring-to-permanence) Becoming in Nietzsche's philosophy. As a result, the infinite, absolute and eternal Becoming of Nietzsche's thought remains un-thought.

By unifying and identifying the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same, Heidegger has injected a taint of teleology into Nietzsche's concept of Becoming. But as Nietzsche often reminds us, Becoming has no goal, purpose or *telos*. Becoming aims at nothing.

Yet, Being becomes: Being is Becoming. There is no truth greater than that and Nietzsche has also reminded us of this. However, we must take into account the fact that Nietzsche's thought is not a unity: it is not a totality: it is an *adiaphory*. By this I mean that it is both in-determinate and in-different. The system, which Nietzsche gives us in aphorisms is infinitely and fragmented. Like Becoming, it is not unitary but self-contradictory. This self-contradiction of Becoming, of thought and life must be accepted and embraced. There is no greater truth than contradiction and self-contradiction.

Nietzsche takes this truth to its absolute limit. He univocally and irrevocably deconstructs the unity between will to power and eternal recurrence, between Being and Becoming. Being and Becoming cannot be unified in the last instance: this is what constitutes their essential *adiaphory*, their in-determinateness and in-difference. Being and Becoming remain unequivocally separated, *chorismatic*. What becomes, is the will to power. What is, is the eternal recurrence of the same. But we do not commit an injustice

to Nietzsche's thought if we claim that what is, is the will to power and what becomes, is the eternal recurrence of the same. Will to power and eternal recurrence are given in an infinite, ironical play that plays itself out in the various configurations of Being and Becoming. The configurations of Becoming transform and transfigure themselves into configurations of Being.

However, in this way no stability and permanence of Being and Becoming is established: what becomes is the eternal recurrence of the will to power. In order to think this even more fundamentally, we must realize that what returns or recurs is the eternal recurrence of the Becoming of the will to power. Becoming mediates and synthesizes Nietzsche's fundamental concepts of will to power, eternal recurrence, *Übermensch* and nihilism. The power-quantas and power-centers of the will to power are in perpetual Becoming. What recurs in the eternal recurrence of the same is Becoming as impermanence.

The *Übermensch* is the man that understands that he is nothing else but Becoming. He accepts his essence as Becoming and willfully projects himself onto possibilities by transforming and transfiguring himself into what he essentially is. The *Übermensch* is the man who becomes who he is. However, in this way he lets the possibilities of his existence be. He does not fix, de-limit and permanentize his Becoming in Being. Rather the *Übermensch* accepts his passing and finite nature as what it truly is. But in this passing of Becoming, he also glimpses the infinite, absolute and eternal aspects of Becoming. It is these aspects which he cannot re-concile with the contradictory, inconsistent and in-coherent aspects of Becoming, but which he must nevertheless affirm as irrevocable aspects of his Being and Becoming.

Finally, nihilism is the fact that Becoming aims at nothing. It has no *telos*.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that Nietzsche leaves behind a certain form of

metaphysics by eliminating teleology from within Becoming. By removing teleology from within Becoming, Nietzsche in-finitizes and removes the limits of Becoming and Being which Heidegger had sought to restore. In this way Becoming is conceived as perpetual, infinite, absolute, eternal and un-limited flux.

In Nietzsche's philosophy, the will does not will the eternal recurrence of the will and we cannot agree that Nietzsche's philosophy is the ultimate triumph of the philosophy of the will. The will wills Becoming and the infinite, eternal and absolute Becoming of the will to power.

The whole of Nietzsche's thought is not totalizable as a metaphysics of the will to power. The non-totalizable totality of Nietzsche's thought is only totalizable as a metaphysics of Becoming. This metaphysics, is itself a metaphysics that contradicts and undoes itself from within itself. It is a center-less, atelological metaphysics that infinitely, absolutely and eternally becomes. Its fluidity, flux and im-permanence prevent it from resting in Being and presence. It has become, it is, and it will never cease to become.

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